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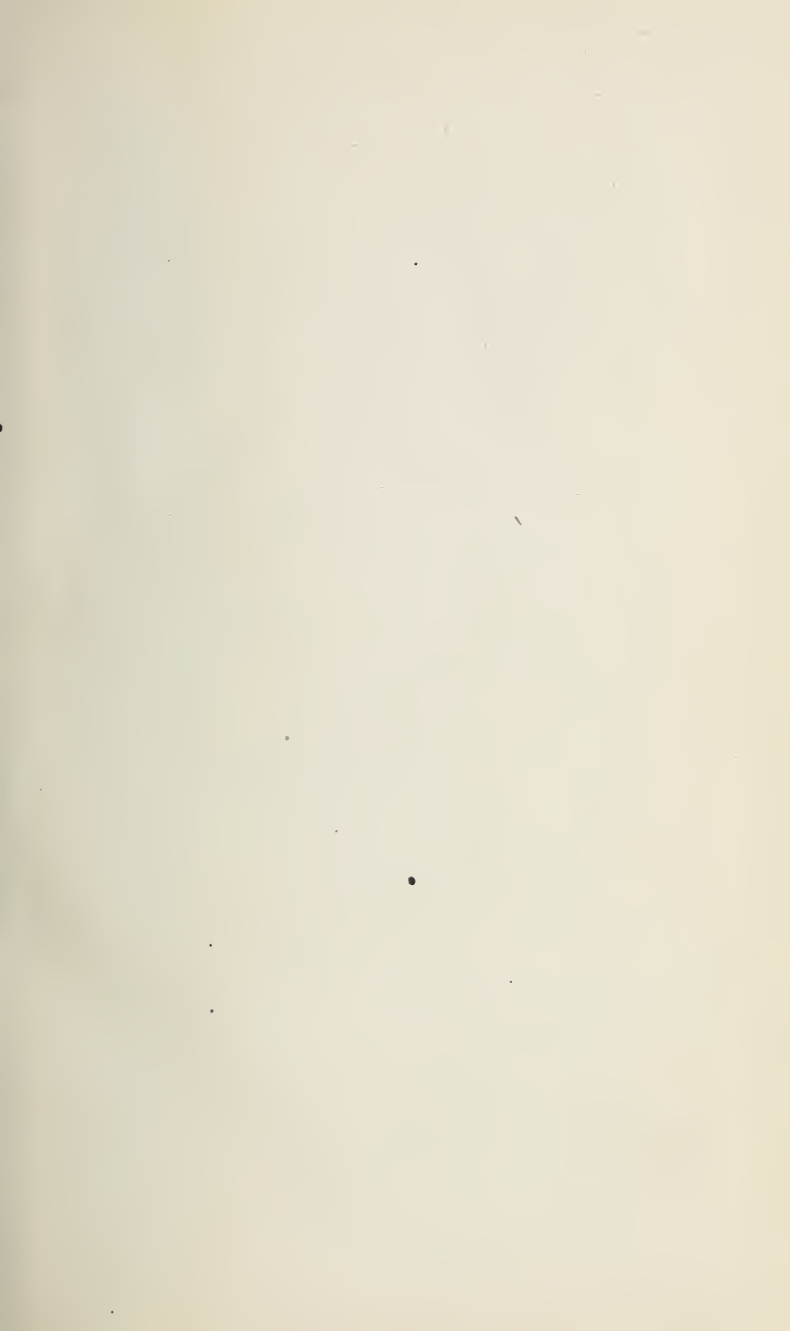
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





Yours Affectionately
Uncle Bob

LETTERS
TO
THE CHILDREN.

BY "UNCLE BOB,"

OF THE "WESTERN METHODIST."

R. M. Blew

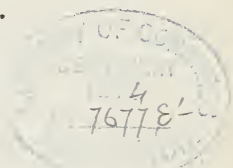
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY R. A. YOUNG, D.D.

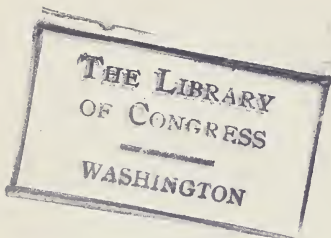
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1875.





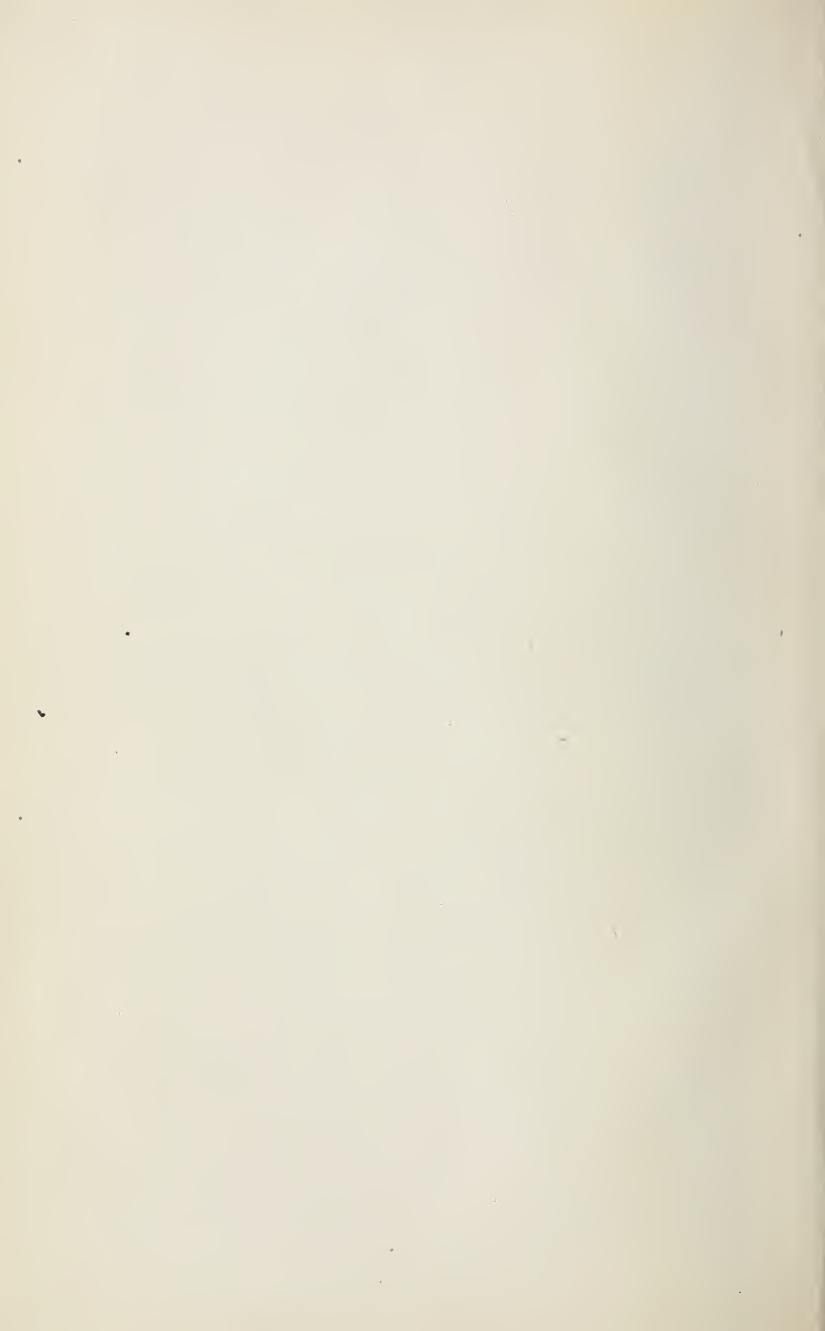
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TO
HIS OWN DEAR CHILDREN,
AND TO
THE BOYS AND GIRLS EVERYWHERE,
THESE LETTERS ARE DEDICATED BY
THE AUTHOR.

(3)



PREFACE.

I HAVE aimed to write so as to profit those for whose benefit I have written. Profound reason, or regular connected thought, need not be looked for in these pages. I did not write for literary fame or the critic's eye. When the first letter was written, I thought it would be the last—had no idea that a book would be the result; but so it is. And now, with the sincere wish that some good may be done, I launch the little thing on the great literary sea, to take care of itself; hoping that the mighty crafts, as they pass, will give it a lift.

THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION.

OUR "Uncle Bob" has been studying and writing these Letters for months. He is a sensible and well-educated Christian gentleman, and has a large family of obedient and pious children. These Letters have all been published in the *Western Methodist* — have been extensively read, and are extremely popular. "Let them be collected and issued in book-form," is the voice of the children and young people of the Church.

There must be something in them worthy of consideration. Reflect and study on what you read. All our elementary works on logic teach us that "attention is necessary to memory." A book that is not worth reading *twice* is scarcely worth reading once.

There can be no apology for careless reading. But there are multitudes who are always reading, and who are never any the wiser for it. Indeed,

their reading spoils instead of improving them. It makes them conceited, and fills their heads with visions and shadows. They have read so many books—perhaps whole libraries—and surely, think they, none are so wise as we. “I,” says one of these dullards, “have read more than any forty of my neighbors, and certainly I must know more than forty times as much as they;” and yet he rarely has a definite idea of the subject treated a month after it has been laid by.

The truth is, these stupid readers deserve to be served, occasionally, like old Dr. Dwight served the student. One beautiful afternoon in the spring-time the Doctor and one of his students drove out into the country. They had not gone far before the Doctor tapped the youngster on the head with his cane. The young man, with evident signs of anger, turned and demanded the reason for such treatment. The good old man smiled graciously upon him, and, pointing to the magnificent landscape around them, quietly replied: “I only wanted you to keep your eyes open.” Your ingenuity, I suppose, makes the application. Keep your eyes open, children, while reading these Letters.

Books frequently form our character, and *sometimes fix our doom*. Benjamin Franklin tells us, in one of his letters, that when he was a boy a little

book fell into his hands entitled, "Essays to do Good," by Cotton Mather. It was tattered and torn, and several leaves were missing. "But the remainder," he says, "gave me such a turn of thinking as to have an influence on my conduct through life; for I have always set a greater value on the character of a doer of good than any other kind of reputation; and if I have been a useful citizen, the public owes all the advantages of it to that little book."

Jeremy Bentham mentions that the current of his thoughts and studies was directed for life by a single phrase that caught his eye at the end of a pamphlet—"The greatest good to the greatest number."

There are single sentences in the New Testament that have awakened to spiritual life millions of dormant souls.

In things of less moment books have a wondrous power. George Law, a boy on his father's farm, met an old unknown book, which told the story of a farmer's son who went away to seek his fortune, and came home after many years' absence a rich man. From that moment George became uneasy, left home, lived over again the life he had read of, returned a millionaire, and paid all his father's debts.

Robinson Crusoe has sent to the sea more sailors

than the press-gang. That story about little George Washington telling the truth concerning the hatchet and the fruit-tree has made many a truth-speaker.

We owe all the Waverley Novels to Walter Scott's early reading of the old traditions and legends, and the whole body of pastoral fiction has come from Addison's Sketches of Sir Roger de Coverley, in the *Spectator*.

But illustrations are numberless. Tremble ye who read. One paragraph may quench or kindle the celestial spark in the human soul.

R. A. YOUNG.

NASHVILLE, TENN., April 4, 1874.

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LETTERS TO THE CHILDREN.

LETTER I.

Time seems to fly—Streaks of gray here and there—Stirred up occasionally—Fine horses—The preachers—Plugging the melons—Preserves and cakes.

DEAR CHILDREN:—I was born in Maryland, not far from the capital of the United States, about thirty-five years ago. That sounds like a long time, but to me it now seems very short. I can remember well when I thought that from one Christmas to another was almost an age; but since I became a man, and assumed the relations of husband and father, the time seems to fly. I can see the streaks of gray here and there in my hair, and some decided lines about my face, reminding me that I am undergoing a change, gradual, but certain.

When I was a boy I went to school part of the time and worked part of the time, although I was never very industrious. I had to be stirred up occasionally—I need not tell you how, because you will doubtless anticipate me, and you know there is

little use in folks writing what everybody knows, although there is much of that sort in newspapers and books nowadays.

My father was a Methodist preacher, and our house used to be head-quarters for the preachers. I used to love to see them come for various reasons—the chief, I believe, was because they used to take so much notice of us children, much more than I believe is taken of children by the preachers in these days, owing, perhaps, to the fact that now the boys and girls get grown so quick—put on the man and woman so soon—I believe you call it “Young America.” Another reason was, they always rode fine horses and had good saddles. Some of them had also a great big sheep-skin, with the wool on it. How I used to enjoy it when I got a chance at one of those! Another reason was, mother always had something extra to eat when they came about. The old preserve jar and the old jam jar came out from their hiding-place. I believe that is the case now with a good many people, and I suppose there are a great many boys who feel just like I used to feel, and for the same reasons. I would not take a great deal for my experience, though I have had a great deal that I do not want any more of. I believe the preserves ought to be taken out oftener, when no company is expected, than they are in many places. Home ought to be made the most pleasant place in the world to children; and I have learned that cakes, preserves, etc., help to make children happy. Don’t you think so?

Father used to be a great hand to raise water-

melons and nutmeg melons. I used to be a great hand to go into the patch, plug 'em before they were ripe, and then turn the cut side down. Sometimes, though not often, I was the first to call attention to the outrage and condemn it. That was to conceal my own guilt. But I never could succeed in that line—my actions and countenance always betrayed me. I came to the conclusion that honesty was the best policy, and quit that way of doing. I soon found that every thing worked better. I could go before father and mother with my head up and with confidence; and whenever accidentally I got into trouble, if I made a candid statement I always found all the relief I needed. That will be the case, boys, nine times out of ten, with all of you. Scorn to do a mean act—never tell a lie—suffer first. If sinners entice you, and you consent and do wrong, make a frank acknowledgment, and resolve to do so no more. Tell it to father and mother. They know how to appreciate your trials, and will not upbraid you, but will admire the man that is in you, and will be much more ready to forgive than you are to ask forgiveness. You have no idea what thrills of pleasure rush through a father's heart when, tremblingly, his little son says: "I did it, papa."

"Hear counsel and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end."

LETTER II.

Don't feel like writing—Sticking to my word—George and I
—Mr. Warfield—Those cakes—That whipping—Very clever
after all.

DEAR CHILDREN:—You may have noticed that my letter of last week was marked No. 1, which meant there are more to come. I have wished several times since that I had not done that, for the reason I don't feel at all like writing this week. But I am a great hand to stick to my word. I do not think a man, woman, boy, or girl amounts to much who doesn't have a high sense of honor. Now, I want you to understand distinctly that fulfilling engagements—doing what you promise—is the principal concomitant of honor. Now, just see, I used that great big word, concomitant, but as I have done so I will let it stand, as doubtless many of my bright little readers will know what it means.

One object I have in view in writing these letters is to make you think some. A word occasionally thrown in which you may have to study a little over, or ask pa or ma the meaning of, may be of service to you. I will not do that much, however, but I will thank any boy or girl who will write me a few lines and give me the meaning of that word. You

can direct your letter to me at the *Western Methodist* office, as I am there often and will get it.

Last week I introduced myself. I want to tell you this time of a little incident, or two, rather, that happened to me and one George M——, when we were going to the little old school-house in sight of my father's. It was one rainy day, and nobody came but the teacher, George, and myself. The old gentleman (Mr. Warfield was his name) chanced to be in a most excellent humor. George and I couldn't exactly understand it, because as a general thing he was what might be called crabbed. He was bald-headed, had big eyes, and wore spectacles. He believed strongly in the oil of hickory, and kept a long old specimen standing behind him in the corner. Now, are you surprised that, under all these circumstances, we often felt ticklish? Well, all that aside. Now for the facts. We had a tolerably good lesson, and Mr. Warfield got through with us about twelve o'clock, and told us we could go home for the day. This delighted us, you know. As we were about to depart, the old man lifted the fall of his well-worn desk and hauled out a couple of ginger-cakes, about the size of a saucer, and gave us one each. How we did scrape and bow, and then how we did eat and talk, as we trudged toward home! It has been a good many years, but I can well remember the conversation. It was something like this:

George. Willie (I was Willie), aint Mr. Warfield a nice man?

Willie. You are right, George; there are not

many men that would have given us these cakes, would they?

George. No; they may all say what they please, Willie, but to tell you the truth, I always did like Mr. Warfield. It is true he whips us sometimes, but then it don't hurt long, does it?

I said n-o, with a mental reservation. We lived near each other, but George a little farther off than I. When we got to our house George bid me good-bye in the best of humor, just like all the boys and girls ought always to do, and started for his home with a "hurrah for Mr. Warfield."

The next time we went to school a change occurred—a remarkable change—we both got whipped. We had another conversation *that* day. I want you to put the two together and mark the difference. I think you will then be able more clearly to appreciate the old saying, "Circumstances alter cases."

George. Don't you think it was mean in him to whip us for that little thing?

Willie. Yes, I do. I expect he is taking pay for his old cakes.

George. I wish we had n't taken them—they were old, dry things anyhow; and besides, they don't cost but a cent apiece.

George and I came to the conclusion that it was a bad omen to be treated kindly and to accept presents from our teacher; and when we saw him treating a boy with special kindness we used to say: "Never mind, you will get that old hickory to-morrow."

But to tell you the truth, children, we were very

naughty sometimes, and often needed to be corrected. Children should learn early to respect their teachers, and render them strict obedience. Show me a boy or girl who is disobedient to parents and teachers, plays truant, and wants always his or her own way, and I can form a pretty correct estimate of what their future will be. They are likely to become blots on society.

One thing now, before I close this letter. I said in the outset that I did not feel a bit like writing. I told the truth. But now I am convinced that I did right to write, though I did not feel like it. This reminds me to admonish you of one very important feature regarding the duties of life. You will find that many times, when you "don't feel like it," there are duties to perform, and unless you press forward and discharge them irrespective of feeling, it will sadly derange that perfection of physical, intellectual, moral, and religious development which is attainable. Whatever, therefore, is your duty to do—and any thing that the law of God requires, through father, and mother, and teachers, becomes such—do it at once, and do it well; and my word for it, if you do not occupy the first places in the land it will not be because you are not fit for them.

"Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

LETTER III.

I know she's smart—Her letter—Making character—Waiting on a sick mother—Gilt-edged—The things that pay best.

DEAR CHILDREN:—Another week has rolled round, and I am under obligations to write another letter. Since the last one was written I have received a nice little communication from an intelligent girl, eleven years old, telling me the meaning of that big word, “concomitant.” I know she is smart by the style of writing and manner of expression. However, I will publish her letter just here, and let you be the judge yourself. If any of you think you can beat it, I would like for you to try:

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—We take the *Western Methodist* at our house. I read your two letters in that paper, and was very much interested in them. I hope you will continue to write. I thought I would comply with your wishes, and tell you the meaning of that “big word, concomitant.” It means to go along with, accompany—for example: truthfulness accompanies honor.

You have no idea how much I prize that letter, and how glad I am that I have contributed to the gratification and interest of one child. I feel am-

ply paid. You remember that last week I felt stupid, and did not want to write. Suppose I had given way to that feeling! I never would have received that little girl's letter, and she would not have learned what she did, at least so soon. This will do to think about.

Another thought: Each one of you who may read these lines has been making character since last week, either good or bad. I want you to pause after reading this declaration, and ask yourself the question: What kind of character have I been forming? If you are at a loss to decide the case yourself, ask your mother—she can tell you.

Now, I want to suppose a few things, which, if you have done, you have been making bad character. First, then, if you frowned and cried when your father told you to chop some wood, or to take the old gray, sorrel, bay, or black horse to water; or if you replied to him that you always had the most to do, and you wonder why John or Henry couldn't do it; or if you spoke cross to your mother, and told her you wouldn't, when she asked you so kindly to bring a bucket of water; or if you got angry and left her presence all in a pout, then stood at the corner of the house, or behind the chimney, and said naughty words, and wished you were a little bigger, so that you might run away; if you ate the apple mother left on the mantel, if you hooked the sugar, or broke the window, and when the inquiry was made who did it, you vowed and declared that it wasn't you; if you have been cruel to any of the dumb animals that cannot complain or tell

on you ; if you have neglected to render gratitude to God, or, in other words, to say your prayers, you have undoubtedly, by these things, made broad and ugly lines of bad character.

Now, let me suppose a few other things, which, if you have done, you have been making good character. If you have been obedient, ever ready to give mother all the assistance in your power—and you do not know how it lightens her toil to think she has a little son or daughter to help her; if mother was sick, and little Mary sat at the head of the table, and graced it like a little lady; if father was sick, and John rolled up his pants, buttoned his coat, tied his comfort about his neck, and went out in the storm to feed the cows and hogs, locked the corn-crib, and then came in with his face all aglow with smiles, ready for other commands; if any thing was wanted it was asked for, and not taken unless permission was given; if you have been willing that your pa and ma should decide as to cases involving propriety, and then cheerfully submitted to their judgment; if you have made efforts to improve your mind, your manners, your tastes, you have, in these things, made good character. Yes, you have been making what I would call “gilt-edged.”

I see a great many boys and girls in my travels, and sometimes I meet some of the “gilt-edged” kind. I am drawn toward them at once. It is no trouble for me to love them. I delight in them, and often say, when I meet them, how I would like to see the world filled with that kind. It requires a

great effort on my part to love a bad child, and I know other people are just like me in this respect. I have heard them say it. So if you want to be noticed and loved specially, you must be good and polite. You will find that those two things—goodness and politeness—will go farther and last longer, and pay better, than any thing.

“In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.”

LETTER IV.

Mind full—Will endeavor to make out—Intellect and information—A rainy day—The doctor—The pine-fat pill—Whole pot of beans spoiled—Dead flies in the ointment—The trial—The sentence.

DEAR CHILDREN :—I hardly know where to begin to write this week. My mind is so full of things I want to tell you, that it seems all jumbled up. However, I will endeavor to make it out somehow.

Last week I inserted in my letter a note I had received from a little girl, giving the meaning of that big word, "concomitant." Since then I have received another note from Fulton, Ky. The writer does not give her age, but I feel sure she is much older than the other. You will perhaps say: "I wonder how he knows." Well, I'll tell you. Some things are so brilliant in themselves that they shine through every thing with which they come in contact—two of which are intellect and information. This little letter contains both in a high degree. Read it and see:

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—That word "concomitant" is a pretty big word for a little girl to analyze, but I will try it. I presume you only want some of the little ones to tell you what they

think it means in the sense you use it. Then, dear uncle, in this place I think it means that your desires, your thoughts, and your purposes to do right, or something good, kind, and useful to others, and to associate many sweet and instructive thoughts, words, and wishes with what you say, and that you will be *certain* to say them at the time and in the manner you promise, would be some of the concomitant or united and closely associated ideas and objects of any thing about which you speak or do that is good and honorable. If this is not your meaning in that particular place by "concomitant," please, dear uncle, explain what it is to your little niece, JESSIE.

The writer has made a fine analysis indeed. The scope she has given to its meaning is much more extensive than I intended it to be in the connection in which I used it. Are you not surprised to know that one word conveys so much? A word: how rich it is often! I have read many a time in a very old book something like this in regard to a word—*Fitly* spoken. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

I was riding on the cars the other day, and as we went staving along I got to thinking over the time when I was a boy about your size. We children used to be put to ourselves, sometimes, when it rained, in a little room away down at the far end of the house. I remember once when something like half a dozen of us were put up to keep us out of the wet, and out of mischief. The scheme was successful as far as the wet was concerned, but you will perceive before I finish that we got into mischief—yes, we played the mischief.

We concluded to organize a hospital. My oldest sister was the doctor, the rest of us were patients—

sick folks. After we sick ones were all arranged on our pallets, the doctor began operations. There was a slow fire in the chimney-place, made in part of green pine. Over this fire hung a large pot of *beans* cooking for dinner. As the pine-wood got warmer, from the ends oozed a sap that you boys call "fat," properly rosin. Out of said fat the doctor made pills about the size of the end of your little finger, and after feeling of our pulse and looking at our tongues, gave orders that we should take one every so many hours. When the doctor returned, all of us were considerably improved, and did not need any more medicine. So we got up, and in company with the doctor took our seats around the fire. While sitting there the doctor dropped one of the pills in the pot of beans. We did not know then how to appreciate the importance of little things—specially *bad* little things—and so left the pine-fat pill in the pot. It permeated (there! I have used another big word) the whole mess. Every thing moved on as pleasantly as you please until dinner-time. Everybody was hungry, and anticipated great satisfaction eating beans. Father was particularly fond of them. Mother helped him pretty largely, knowing both his willingness and capacity. Imagine, if you can, the exclamation of surprise when the first mouthful was taken! "Mother," said he (he always called his wife mother), "what is the matter with these beans to-day?" "I am sure I don't know; what do they taste like?" "Why, like pine-fat, rosin, or something of that sort." "Phew, there now," thought

I, "we are all in trouble." The next thought was how to get out of it. I was the youngest, and the pet of the family, of course. So no matter what happened, I was not in much danger. But the rest, and specially the doctor, were rather uncomfortable. Mother, remembering that we all were in the room when the beans were cooking, said at once: "Some of you children have been meddling with that pot; who was it?" Each being anxious to clear himself, said, It was Rachel—the doctor. We then went into an examination of the case, and had to tell all about how it happened. After the testimony was all in, mother, being judge, rendered the verdict; and what do you think it was? Why, that we children should eat every one of those beans! That was heavy, because we had a very large family, and there were a great many beans; besides, they were all spoiled. I managed, somehow, to have the decision reversed as to me, but the others had the matter to meet. I do not now remember whether they ate them all or not. I rather think that after they had worked on them several days, by promising faithfully not to meddle with any thing else as long as they lived, the whole of them were pardoned. Beans were at a discount with the doctor and his patients after that affair. I rarely ever see beans now that I do not think of that case.

Now for a thought: that little piece of pine-fat, not larger than a pea, spoiled that whole pot of victuals. It was so small that it could not be seen after it was thrown in. Ay, it melted entirely, and seemed to have vanished away; but it did its work,

and so will every little evil thing you do. Every untruth, every frown, every cross word, every disobedience, every transgression, every evil thought, will work just like the pine-fat in the beans. It will spoil life.

A wise man, the wisest one that ever lived, or ever will live, stated positively once what flies would do in a pot of ointment. Now, what boy or girl can tell me the name of that man, and where the statement is recorded? Let's see.

"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

LETTER V.

The Western Methodist—A No. 1 Editor—Distinguished men
—A few letters—Hickory-nuts—The smutty end of the
poker.

DEAR CHILDREN:—I have been getting so many letters since I wrote my last, that I have concluded to print them, instead of writing so much myself. I am delighted to find that so many little boys and girls read the papers, and especially the *Western Methodist*. I mention that one specially, because it is the organ of my Conference, and I think everybody belonging to the Church—I mean the Methodist Church—within the bounds of its circulation, ought to take it and read it; they will find a great deal of useful as well as instructive reading in it. Brother Johnson is a No. 1 Editor, and labors hard to make a good paper. Besides, he has many excellent writers helping him. Sometimes I pick up the paper, and what an array of talent I find! It was only the other day that I saw a* number that contained articles from the pens of the following distinguished men of our Church: Bishop Keener, Dr. J. B. McFerrin, Dr. R. A. Young, Dr. A. R. Winfield, Dr. Cunnyngnam, and others—all of whom write a great deal that every little boy and girl that can read can understand.

Now for the letters. Well, the first is from "Jennie;" she says she would like to know me. I wish I knew her, because if she tries to do as well as she writes, I am sure the pleasure that it would afford me to add her name to my list of friends would be very great. I want you all to read her letter over carefully, and when you get to the place where the star is, I want you to open your eyes wide, and charge your memory with what follows. Each one of you will be safe, if you will follow her example:

UNCLE BOB:—My unknown uncle, at your request in your letter No. 2, in the *Western Methodist*, to little children, you want some little girl or boy to write to you and give you the definition of "concomitant." Dear Uncle Bob, 'tis true 'tis a big word for children to understand, but as I have had some little advantage of a school-room, and parents who try to instruct me, I will try and answer your question. Does not the word "concomitant" mean companion, etc.?

I have had some dear and devoted classmates, whom I loved much, and never tried to deceive them, and I hope I may never be like the two little boys which you described in your letter No. 2, that went to school one rainy day and met no other boys, and them and teacher was alone, and in dismissing them he gave them some cakes out of his desk, and then they loved and praised the teacher very much, and when they returned to school, for some naughty thing, or neglecting their duty, the teacher found it his duty to use the rod, and then they hated him very much. Uncle Bob, I think those were very naughty boys, and I do not think that their parents taught them correctly, for it was for their good that they received chastisement from their teacher. On the contrary, they should have loved their teacher and thanked him for his correction.

* I am a little girl, twelve years old, and have not had many advantages of good teachers, but I always studied very hard

and tried to gain the affections of my dear teachers and classmates, and I always told them the truth, and I always obeyed them, and consequently I never received a whipping at school, and not much from my parents. My papa never whipped me in his life, and always taught me to tell the truth and be liberal and kind to every one, and to love and respect persons older than myself, and to be kind to my concomitants.

I am a regular reader of the *Western Methodist*, and I am always delighted when we get it from the office. I try to do what will please my parents and my sister and brother, and I would like very much to have the pleasure of seeing Uncle Bob. I think I would soon learn to love him too. If Uncle Bob should visit Brownsville, Tenn., my parents live five miles north of Brownsville, and would be pleased to see you.

Yours truly,

JENNIE.

The next is from "Addie." One of the principal objects I had in view, tells in her case. She did not know the meaning of the word, but she got the dictionary and hunted it out. That's the way to get information that will stick—hunt it out:

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—I have just read your letter to the children. You asked some of us little folks to tell you the meaning of the word "concomitant." Webster says it means companion. I did not know what that big word meant, but I got the dictionary and looked it out. I am glad to receive your letters.

ADDIE.

The next is from "Annie," away over yonder at Fort Smith, Ark. One would think that she was in communication with the editor, and that he had told her who I am. She thinks she knows. I wonder if she can't guess again; who knows but she would strike it next time:

UNCLE BOB:—I thank you very much for your letters in the *Methodist*. I like them very much. I remember very well

the day that we crossed the Arkansas River at Van Buren, ~~at~~ the time of the Conference. Now you are in disguise. You are nobody but the very ——. I wish you and your "concomitants" great success. Now, good-bye, ——. My name is Annie —.

The next is from T. G. P., a little boy. I can see the boy all through it. I know he is a boy, because he takes particular care to mention the sweet-cakes and hickory. You know we are apt to talk about things we love, and all boys love cakes and hickory-nuts. He makes an apology also for bad writing, and threatens me with what he will do when he "gets" a man. That boy has vim. I like to see it; he will rise in the world. Mark that. And after "Uncle Bob" is dead, he may tower above his fellows in the councils of the nation. Stranger things have happened often. "The smutty end of the poker" always leaves its mark:

UNCLE BOB:—Well, I have found your great big word, "concomitant." It means being together, and you said you would thank some boy or girl to send you the meaning of it. Well, Uncle Bob, you wrote about your sweet-cakes and the hickory! Well, Uncle Bob, I know you will think this is wrote with the smutty end of the poker; but wait till I get a man, and I will write pretty, too.

T. G. P.

I may tell you next week about the cracked jug and the horse I used to ride, named Snug.

"Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men."

LETTER VI.

Johnny Constant—Billy Reglar—A peace-man—Snug—The broken jug—An awful fix—I was in tears.

DEAR CHILDREN:—Below find a few more letters, written by my juvenile friends. They are from Arkansas, Kentucky, and Tennessee, and will interest you.

One of my correspondents wants me to write and tell him if “George” and myself have ever had a whipping since Mr. Warfield gave it to us on the cake account. Yes, we got many a one after that, although I was always opposed to fighting; so much so, I never struck back, but just took it as calmly as the circumstances would allow. I am a peace-man now; do n’t believe in war, quarreling, or strife of any sort, among men or children. I remember well a little piece that was in my reading-book when I went to school—I fear has been forgotten by a great many. I will insert it here, and want you all to read it and “tell it round:”

“Let dogs delight to bark and bite,
For God has made them so;
Let bears and lions growl and fight—
It is their nature, too;

But, children, you should never let
 Such angry passions rise;
 Your little hands were never made
 To tear each other's eyes."

Now, for the letters:

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—While you address yourself to "*children*," I must think you include me, for really I am only a child—a school-girl, not half through with my studies. Your very amusing and instructive narrative about the doctor, the pills, and the beans, gives us another big word—"permeated." Well, that means to penetrate, to saturate, to pass into every part without displacing the substance into which it passes, as the rosin did the beans, as the beans did the doctor and her patients, after being compelled to eat them; as the reading of your narrative did my laughing powers, and as the excellent moral did my mind, producing gravity and serious thoughts. Affectionately,

JESSIE.

UNCLE BOB—*Dear Sir*:—I was very much pleased with your letter of last week to the boys and girls, and hope you will continue them. And now I will tell you what is the meaning of your big word, "concomitant." It means accompanying, attendant, that is the attendants of honor. If I have not given you the proper answer, please correct. Uncle Bob, I cannot help envying you your cake, but not your whipping. Hoping to hear from you often through the *Western Methodist*, I sign myself, as ever, your juvenile friend,

BEN. W. SHEPARD.

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—The question about the wise man is so very easily answered that it must be intended for very little children, so I will answer it. The wise man was Solomon. I do not find the place where the wise man says *one fly* will spoil a pot of ointment. In the 10th chapter of *Ecclesiastes*, and the first verse, I find that "*dead flies*" spoil the "*apothecary's ointment*," and that "*a little folly*" spoils a person's reputation. I think *one sin* would spoil a child's heart. Your loving

ALICE.

UNCLE BOB—*Dear Sir*:—I am well pleased with your letter in the *Western Methodist*. I have just found out "*concomi-*

tant" — it means to assist, to help, to aid, to build up. If you please, write to me and tell me if you and George have ever got a whipping since Mr. Warfield gave you those cakes. Hoping to hear from you very often, I would like to have had your cakes, but not your whipping. EUGENE B. BUNCH.

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—I am a close reader of the *Western Methodist*, and am very much interested in your letters. I am eight years old. I have been going to school four months—have to study very hard at home. Permeate means to pass through. Solomon was the one who said dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savor—10th chapter of Ecclesiastes, first verse. I remain yours, respectfully,

WILEY W. NUNN.

I promised in my last to tell you something about the cracked jug and Snug. I will have to leave Snug out, as I am pressed for room. I may bring her in some other time. Molasses was a staple at our house when I was a boy. We children gave it and cornbread nicknames. Molasses was "Billy Regular," and cornbread was "Johnny Constant." Let's see. We used to have molasses on our bread, on our mush, on our rice, in our taffy, and, when sugar was scarce, in our coffee. It then went by the name of "Long Sweetening." Then we had it in our milk after it got thick. Webster calls it "bonny clabber," and spells it like I have written it; but when I went to school we used to spell it this way: "*Baugh-naugh-claugh-baugh*." In some of the ways mentioned I did not like it, but I had to put up with it, and many other things I did n't like, in those days, just as I have to do now.

I used to think then, when I got to be a man matters would go just to suit me, and if they did n't

I would make them do it. Mother used to say to me sometimes: "Ah, child, you are now eating your white bread! You will jump out of the frying-pan into the fire." That was a strong manner of expressing *this* thought. Being a man or a woman will not lessen the responsibilities, cares, or troubles of life, but rather increase them. I mention this for the benefit of those who are now having what they call "a hard time." Every trouble you have early in life will be that much to your advantage. It is a schooling that is necessary, and you know that the boys who have the best teachers and study hard, go through life as men, with confidence, and do much to bless mankind; while those who never had to rough it any, always had "a good easy time," generally let every thing go easy and easier, and really do n't amount to much any way.

Then, in harvest-time father made a drink for the hands out of molasses and ginger, called sangeree. We were great temperance folks, and father had that as a substitute for whis-*key*; consequently we never had any drunkards about us, and our work was as well and promptly done as that of those who gave the hands "drams." Father used to say that he did not want to take the responsibility of making drunkards. "And," said he, "when once a young man begins to take his daily drink of any thing that will intoxicate, no one can tell where the end will be." Hence he never offered the "bottle" to his neighbor's lips, he never kept it about the house, and never wanted mother to use it in mince-pies. He was a "teetotaller" in all cases except

medicinal, and notwithstanding he was of delicate constitution, he lived until his sixty-fourth year, and had the confidence and respect of everybody that knew him. Had he been a dram-drinker, he would not have been able to properly support and raise his family of children; would have died in all probability ten years before he did, and others, myself among the number, might have been led astray by his example. Boys, the safest plan is never to touch liquor as a beverage. It will lead you into a thousand snares, and overthrow you at last. But I am wandering—I must return.

One day, mother reported the molasses out. I was called, and told to saddle and bridle Snug and go to Savage, a little village two miles off, and have the jug filled. I got ready, put the jug in one end of an old meal-bag and a flat-iron, brick, stone, or something else, in the other to balance, and off I started. After a pleasant ride I found myself in the store, got the molasses and made arrangements to leave. I found the balance of power was on the side of the jug. I abandoned the whatever was in the other end and concluded to take the bag before me. In order to get it up, I had to set it on something and ride along side and lift it. There was a flight of steps in the rear of the store, that was my getting-up place. The bottom step was rough granite. I set the bag on it. I was not as careful in setting it down as I should have been, as you will see before I get through. I found the jug would have to set on what they call the wethers of Snug, and as she walked, her shoulders worked up and

down, and gave me as much as I could do to hold the jug and myself in place. I thought her shoulders worked more that day than ever I had known, but that was not so. I had never had any thing to call my attention to the fact so forcibly. You will find that a great many things are doing more than you think if you will just watch them, specially evil things. I want all you children to keep an eye on your bad habits; their progress will astonish you, and frighten you away from many of them, no doubt. We jogged along, but before half the distance was traveled I found that molasses was dripping from the bag. The thought flashed upon me in an instant that I had set the bag on the granite step too hard and had cracked the jug, and the motion Snug's walking caused increased the crack. I called a halt, and found that as long as we kept still the leak stopped. There I was, far away from home, and it raining. I had to move, and yet I was afraid. Notwithstanding I made Snug walk as slow as I could, I thought her shoulder-blades were getting longer. I was in an awful fix, and began crying, but that didn't help the case a bit. The dripping went on. About a quarter of a mile from home there was a gate. Here my trouble increased, for as I leaned forward to lift the latch, I bore a little, a very little, against the jug, and what do you think? why the whole thing collapsed, went down with a dull sort of a gurgle, and there we were, Snug and I, with a lap full of 'lasses. I was in tears as well as 'lasses. I was n't very pretty, but O how sweet! I was the sweetest boy you ever saw. I

rode up to the house feeling awful. I didn't care about the rain or my bedaubed condition; but to think that I had broken a two-gallon jug and spilled the molasses was too much. I was afraid it would be more than father and mother could stand, for it was about two dollars' worth. That amount looked large to me then. But father, as was his custom, said little—"What a pity!" or something of that sort. Mother was a little more exacting, and I had to go into particulars. After I had explained and given her assurance that nobody could feel any "badder" about the thing than I did, she laughed, gave me some clean clothes, and then I was as happy as I ever have been in my life. So you see that often great happiness immediately succeeds great trial.

That adventure has been a help to me since I've been a man, many a time, when I have had "rough weather." So, boys and girls, I want you to remember that no matter how rough and thorny may be the road over which you travel, others have gone along there before you, when it was rougher, and still have reached the end. So get yourselves ready for whatever comes. Master the situation by diligence and temperance, and you will be the men and women of mark. You will give tone to society—stamp your character upon every incident of life; and then, in the end, you will receive that highest of all commendations: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."

LETTER VII.

Louisville—Galt House—The Mission Sabbath-school—Forgot to look up—A speech—The little preacher.

DEAR CHILDREN:—I am afraid my last week's letter was too long, and may be some of you didn't read it all. I won't write as much this time, but I will try and give you something to think about. I have received some of the neatest little letters since my last that you ever saw. I wish I could show them to you, but I can't, for then you would learn who I am, and that wouldn't do, you know. I will print them, though, just like I have done some others, and let you see how they look.

Since I began these letters how the weeks have rolled off! By the time I get one finished, it is time to begin another, and I am ever wondering what I will have to say next.

I went to that beautiful city, Louisville, Ky., a few years ago, and put up at the Galt House, one of the most elegant hotels in the country.

I was there on Sunday. You know some people don't get up as soon that day as they do on week-days, and consequently breakfast is late, and often

every thing is put back. The result is, when people do that way often their children get to the Sunday-school when it has been opened, and all the lessons half over; and they get to church themselves, if indeed they go at all, after the preaching is begun. That interrupts the quietness that should always be observed during divine service. Everybody ought to get up soon Sunday, and give the whole day to God.

I was up betimes that morning, and found I was too soon for breakfast. I walked into one of the reception-rooms, took a seat, and began to study a little. I was going to attend Brother Rivers's Sunday-school, and I did n't know but the superintendent or preacher would ask me to say something, and I was trying to think it up. While sitting there I noticed a small flat book lying on the center-table. I picked it up, and found that it was filled mostly with advertisements, but here and there was a little reading. One piece had this heading:

“FORGOT TO LOOK UP.”

It attracted my attention. I began to read. The more I read the more interested I became. It was a good piece, and showed so clearly and forcibly what a child did, that I got it almost by heart. In the afternoon there was a large Sunday-school gathering of the mission. I attended. Dr. Sehon was there, and although I took a back seat and tried to hide, his keen eye spied me out, and the first thing I knew he was introducing me to the audience, and making arrangements for me to speak. That scared

all my set speeches out of me. I thought of the piece I had read at the hotel, and concluded that would be a good place and time to use it. I did so, and I expect some boys and girls who heard it remember it to this day.

I will now tell it to you, and want you all to read, and re-read it, until you can tell it without looking at it. Listen, now, for it begins here :

A man, either too lazy or too proud to work, got out of corn. His neighbor had a good crop not far from his house, and he concluded to go and steal some. He took a sack and his little son with him. When he reached the field he set the little fellow on the fence to watch, and instructed him to tell him if he saw any one coming. Before he began to pull the ears from the stalk he looked east, west, north, and south. Satisfied that no one saw him, he began. He had not pulled an ear when his little son interrupted him, saying, "Papa, there is one way you forgot to look." The old man said, "Which?" The little fellow raised his baby arm, and with his index finger pointing upward toward the sky, said, "You forgot to look up." That was one of God's arrows, and it was pointed with fire. It pierced the breast of that man, and burned out every speck of rogue. He didn't steal an ear of that corn. He took his empty sack on his arm, and *his little preacher* by the hand, and went home a changed man. He was converted afterward, and no doubt died in the faith and was saved. I wondered then, and have ever since, what became of the boy. I feel satisfied that he must have made his mark in the world, but

I would be much more gratified if the writer had given his record. I suppose he didn't know it.

The lessons to be learned from this story are these:

1. Children can work for God. They can use the cross-bow of the gospel, and shoot arrows with as much precision and force as if they were giants.

2. When tempted to do wrong of any sort, although no human eye sees you, remember that the all-seeing eye of the great God is upon you, and that it is impossible to hide any thing from him.

There is a passage of scripture which this story calls to my mind. I want you to hunt it up and see if I quote it right: "The eye of the Lord is in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

You have read my letter, now read your own. They all please *me* very much. I would say to my little friend, Betty, who invites me down to eat fried chicken, that she must keep them for the preachers; pork and beans, with a very little molasses, will do me.

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—Your kind letters to the children every week are highly prized, and read with much pleasure. They must feel complimented when they see that you do not forget them, and even write when you do not feel like it. Although "the pot of beans," when seasoned with the pine pill, did not prove palatable to the cook, still it has taught a pretty moral for Sunday-school children; and now that it is too late to regret the accident, may we not be thankful that it happened? Some of your readers prefer your letter column to Dr. Young's column. Hoping you will continue to favor us with your letters and sentiments, I subscribe myself one of your ever-grateful

READERS.

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—I have been a long time saying that I

was going to write to you, and tell you what that big word meant. It means accompanying, joined to, or attendant. We take the *Western Methodist* at our house, and I like it so much. I live in the beautiful little Valley of Arcadia, in Missouri. It is not far from St. Louis. My pa is a preacher—he preaches at St. Louis. I go to school at the Arcadia College. It is a fine brick building, four story high. If you ever come to Arcadia, we would be pleased to see you at our house. I am only thirteen years old, and so you must excuse bad writing, and next time I will do better; any way, I will *try*. I take music lessons on the piano, and am learning real fast, so when you come to see us I will play some for you.

I have always heard that ministers like fried chickens. You know I said that papa was a preacher, so we always have a good many chickens on hand; so, if *you* want any, come down this summer. From your little friend, BETTY G. LEWIS.

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—Mamma takes the *Western Methodist*, and I have read all of your letters, and the letters you got from “the little girls.” So I thought as I was a little girl I would write and tell you that I think I have found out who the wise man was, and what he said about the flies in the ointment. It is found in Ecclesiastes x. 1. It is this: “Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savor; so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor.” The meaning of “permeated,” in the way you used it, meant that it melted and caused all of the beans to taste like the pill itself. I hope you will continue to write and give us something to hunt out every week. Your loving little niece,
CLARA.

P. S. I forgot to tell you the name of the wise man—it is Solomon.
C.

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—We got the *Western Methodist* at our house this morning, and of course I was eager to read “Uncle Bob’s” fourth letter to children; and let me thank you first for the interest you are taking in us “little folks;” we feel quite important now, to see one column of our *Methodist* devoted to the children. I am sorry I was too late in sending

the meaning of the word "concomitant." I found it out, but see that some little girls were ahead of me. This time I want to be fast enough, and hope that I won't be disappointed in the answer.

Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived, or that ever will live, and in Ecclesiastes x. 1 I found this: "Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savor; so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor." Sometimes I am afraid this is not the answer, but I will venture to send this. I am twelve years old. My name is Annie Quarles, and I live at Fulton, Hempstead county, Ark. Accept the best wishes of your little friend,

ANNIE.

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—I read your letters in the *Western Methodist*, and like them very much. I am a little boy twelve years old—hope I am not too old to answer your question in your last letter. It was Solomon who was the wisest man that ever lived, or ever will live. It was he who said a fly would spoil a pot of ointment. And you will find it recorded in Ecclesiastes x. 1.

I will also tell you the meaning of that big word "permeated," if you have no objection. It means to pass through the pores, that is, mixing all through. Hoping to hear from you every week, I will bid you adieu.

CHARLIE.

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—I am afraid that my little sister, Willie, will get ahead of me, as she is trying very hard to write you a nice letter. "Permeate" means to pass through. Little children are like little twigs. If they are trained up right when they are little, they will grow right; as the proverb says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." That is a good proverb, and a true saying. I am a little girl, eleven years old. I am afraid, Uncle Bob, you might think that I did not write this letter, but I did. From your little friend,

PAYNE.

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—I am sorry that I did not write sooner. "Permeate" means to go through, like the pill of rosin per-

meated the pot of beans. One little sin will permeate the whole body, mind, and heart. I am a little girl, nine years old. From your little friend,

WILLIE.

UNCLE BOB:—We take several good papers, among which is the *Methodist*, which is the favorite with us children. Your letters to the children are very interesting. In your letter No. 4, I found your question, which you desired some boy or girl to answer; so I got my Bible and looked it up. It was spoken by Solomon, the wisest man, and may be found in Ecclesiastes x. 1: "Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savor; so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor." I am aged fourteen years.

R. P. W.

"Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

LETTER VIII.

Horror of gray hair—Cheating nature—Painting and powdering—The golden age—The child dies in less than an hour—We are monarch of all we survey.

DEAR CHILDREN:—I think a great deal of old people. I was always taught to honor age, and to pay the fathers and mothers in Israel the greatest respect. Some people don't want to grow old. They have a horror of gray hair, and of the furrows that time plows upon their cheeks. Some of them go so far as to try to cheat Nature of her rights, by dyeing their hair, and filling up the furrows with paint. They do not succeed, however, for old Nature is stern and firm—won't be moved. Nay, she scorns the very idea, and if you will notice you will see how she shoves it all off every few days. It won't do for folks to complain about not having their rights, and being deprived of them, and all that, while they are doing the same things of which they complain, and against a higher law. Children—girls specially—I want to warn you against these things: don't powder, don't paint, don't dye your hair. You may think now that I am an old fogey, and perhaps some of the young la-

dies will think me impertinent, but all such have given the matter scarcely any thought, and are unacquainted with the philosophy that lies at the bottom.

If you will listen to me a few minutes now, I will tell you my reasons for giving you such advice, and if you do n't find out before, you will when you grow up and study carefully the laws which govern the physical world.

The skin is filled with little holes, called pores. Through these little holes the forces within throw out all impurities as fast as they accumulate. This is necessary, in order to health. Nature, or rather, nature's God, made this provision, and it is your duty to see that it is not infringed upon. If you fill up these pores with chalk, starch, mean-fun, balms, lily-white, or other humbugs, which profess to make you pretty, do n't you see that the healthy life-current is obstructed, and ceases, in a great measure, to exercise its functions in that part of the body? The skin first becomes rough, then begins to shrink, wrinkle, and lo! you will be old and sallow before you are middle-aged. These things are so, and if you do n't believe it, just follow in the footsteps of the mass of young ladies of the period, and take the consequences. And then—when you find out for yourself—I want you to drop me a line, if I'm living.

Let me tell you a fact: If some of the young women, and old ones too, were to smear over their bodies like they do their faces, they could not live one day. A certain monarch wanted to represent

the golden age, and thought a living being would be the best subject. He took a child, spread it over with a preparation to which gold leaf would stick, and then had it covered all over with gold. When the job was done, all of the little pores were completely closed, and the child died in less than an hour.

It is important, my dear children, that you should know something about the laws that belong to the well-being of your little bodies, because these are said, in the Bible, to be the temples of God, and if any defile them, those who do that thing, God will destroy.

But see how much I am writing. I am afraid I will be too long. Our letters took up over two columns of the paper last week. I felt a little ticklish when I saw it, because I am acquainted with the editor, and he is the greatest man on space you ever saw. He likes a good deal himself, but sometimes he cuts down other folks mightily. I was afraid he would snap his scissors at us. That, you know, would make us feel bad. But then he is smart, and knows a thing or two. He knows that there are some little boys and girls that could get up a club of subscribers, if they would try; that they all will be men and women in a few years; that some of the boys will be preachers, and will wield a great influence, and that they will be sure to remember those who gave them attention when they were "little people." I was relieved the other day when I saw him. Instead of saying, "Look here, old gentleman, you must wind to a close," he said to

me, easy, so nobody else could hear him: "How much 'space' do you want me to leave for you next time?" I breathed long, and said, "About two columns, I reckon." He turned off with a pleasant smile, and behold! "we are monarch of all we survey, our right there is none to dispute." Now, children, let's fill the space allowed, and try to do something for the paper that grants us such a privilege.

Since my last, a little pet, named Mary, from Mt. Zion, Tenn., has written me another letter. She searched the dictionary, and gives a correct explanation to the "big word," but as it has been noticed so much, I will omit that part of her letter, and publish the remainder. She says:

I am eleven years old. I live near Mt. Zion. Dear Uncle Bob, I would like to see you. I know you are a good old man. I like all such good old men as you are. I should like very much for you to continue your letters. Well, good-bye, dear Uncle Bob.

MARY.

For the present I must bid you adieu. But before I do so, I wish to give you something to hunt up. Here it is: How many commandments are there?

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whose confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy"

LETTER IX.

A big cat—An old hen—Selling the calves—My grief—Snug's sickness—Conscience at work—While folks are alive, the time to treat them respectfully—Snug dies.

DEAR CHILDREN:—I suppose each boy of you that lives in the country has a horse, mule, cow, calf, hog, dog, or some other live animal, to which you have taken a fancy, and call it yours.

Each girl has, especially the Marys, "a little lamb, with fleece as white as snow," a big cat, an old hen with chickens, or young ducks, or a bird's nest in the honeysuckle, or something else that she calls hers, and to which she gives much attention.

A desire to own something seems to be prominent in human nature. It was just so when I was a boy. I came very near claiming every thing, and you do not know how sad I used to be when a huckster's white-covered wagon, filled with shad and herring from the old Potomac, drove up into our yard. Some favorite calf, or sheep, was sure to go. I used to enter my protest, but it was of no avail. Father wanted fish, and as money was scarce, bartering or trading was the order of the day. I often wished that I had the money. I would have never parted with the pets. When the trade was made,

the calves or lambs tied, and lifted into the wagon, I used to bid them good-bye, then go to the barn, or behind the house, and cry. I have done so many a time.

Sometimes, however, the animals to which I was attached were never sold. It seemed to be their lot to die with us. When such an event occurred I was miserable. I had reflections that it would be impossible for me to describe to you fully. Some of my thoughts, though, I can mention. The first one was usually this: What did I ever do to make life happy to the poor creature? what did I ever do to make its life hard and weary? I used to wonder if brutes in their sickness and death suffered like people, and whether they would ever live again and tell on me—about my inhumanity to them. I used to worry myself trying to call up the good deeds I had done for them, but it always took three or four to make up for every bad one, and then it wasn't satisfactory. How the remembrance of my ill-treatment of them at times did lash my conscience! I dreamed about it, talked about it often over their dead bodies, and promised myself time and again that I would treat the living better. I think I was made more humane by experience of this kind.

There was on our place one animal that grew up with me, as it were, and for her I formed an attachment of an abiding character. That animal was Snug, the horse I used to ride, and that has been mentioned in a previous letter. Snug was what I used to call red, but I believe "they all said" she was sorrel. She had a beautiful curly blaze in her

face, and a little white about her hind fetlocks, beautifully formed. She was full of life, and as fleet as a hare.

When I saddled and mounted her, with a clean linen suit on, I could take the shine off any boy in the neighborhood. When all hands were busy on the farm, Snug and I had to go to mill. The corn was put into a sack, as equally divided as convenient, then thrown across Snug's back, upon which I was seated, and so off we went. Sometimes I was a little careless, and didn't watch, and the first thing I knew was the unpleasant fact that matters were becoming too one-sided. Then I was in a stew, I can tell you. I would sit as far up on the light side as I could, pat Snug to make her go gently, and wish for somebody to overtake or meet me. I felt the need of a helping hand. Relief came often in time, and every thing was readjusted; but now and then the bag would slide off, and I generally went with it. I was too little to get it up again myself, and so we had to wait. That learned me patience, for it was a long time before any one would come. It wasn't as long as it seemed, but it was all the same to me. I always liked the man who gave me a lift, and promised to do something for him some day. I make it a rule to help every one that needs it if I can. The miller would be busy occasionally, and could not grind my corn, hence I had to go home and return next day. On the way back I would fall in with "George," or some other of my chums, and the first thing suggested was a race. I knew Snug, and was always ready to give them a turn. I don't

think she ever was beaten. Father would hear of the racing, and then came a reckoning. You all know what that means. Thus matters moved on for years.

After awhile Snug began to decline. Each succeeding winter told me that her days were nearly ended. We had large pastures, and used to turn the horses out. One night Snug did not come up. Early next morning I was out hunting her. After awhile I found her in a grove of pines, standing with her head hanging down, just as if she was thinking about something. I went to her, and found she was sick. The weather was pleasant, and we concluded to administer to her in the grove. I would go every day and carry her something to eat, watch by her, and talk to her. She gradually grew worse, and finally got down. I began to think she would die, and then I recalled all my bad treatment of her, and if she could have talked I know she would have forgiven me, because I told her I was sorry, and hugged her round the neck, and did every thing I could to comfort her in her last days. One day I left her, looking, as I thought, better. I was cheered, for, said I, who knows but she will get well? When I went back she was dead. I was greatly grieved. My mind ran back over all the past, and after her body decayed and went to dust, I used to go and look at her bones, and wonder whether I would ever see her again.

Now, children, there is a point I wish to impress upon you. Some people treat their fellow-men, and some children treat their mothers and fathers, just

like I did Snug. When they are about to die, or after they are dead, those children show their bodies greater respect than they did when alive. They make a long funeral-procession—have a fine coffin, and then build up a great marble house to lay their bones in, or erect a massive and costly monument over their graves. They seem to be trying to make amends for what they have done, or failed to do, when their parents were alive. I would rather see manifestations of love and respect after death than not at all; but let me tell you, they come too late. I want every one of my dear little readers, who have fathers and mothers, to do their very best to make them happy while they are living. Remember, a few years comprise about all our earthly communion any way, and if you could only know the anxious thoughts they have about you, and how often sleep leaves them because of their anxiety concerning you, you would be astonished.

I do not expect you to appreciate fully all I have written, because much of it comes only by experience; but then you can be advised by one who has experience, and avoid the difficulties by taking heed to advice.

Here are seven letters I have received this week:

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—We take a good many papers, among which is the *Western Methodist*. I read your letters to the children with the greatest interest, and have been intending to write to you for some time, but have put it off until now. I live in Bolivar, Hardeman county, Tenn., and am thirteen years old. My father is the superintendent of the Methodist Sunday-school at this place. We have a very flourishing Sunday-school. We are having our church repaired, and we would

be very glad to have you come to our District Conference in August next, and would like to have you stop at our house, as I have a great curiosity to see and know Uncle Bob, who is so kind as to write to the children every week. The Rev. J. W. Atkinson is our pastor.

In your last letter you gave a quotation from the Scriptures, and asked the children to look it up and see if you had quoted it right. The quotation you gave was: "The eye of the Lord is in every place, beholding the evil and the good." I find a very slight error in it, but an error, nevertheless. You use eye, singular, for eyes, plural, and is, singular, for are, plural. The passage of scripture reads thus: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Prov. xv. 3.

Hoping that you will continue your instructive and interesting letters to the children, I close my letter for the present, and remain most gratefully, your unknown little friend,

ELLA C. NEWBERN.

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—I have been wanting to thank you some time for your letters to us children in the *Western Methodist*. I thank you now very much. I felt so sorry for you, Uncle Bob, when I read about your getting the jug broke, and was very much relieved when I found your pa and ma didn't scold. I did hunt up your quotation—hunted it up with the help of the Concordance. It should have been, "The eyes of the Lord are," instead of "the eye of the Lord is." A gentleman from Memphis, by the name of Mr. B——, once visited our little town, and complained mightily of the mud. If he was here now he would think we had mud sure enough. If you know Mr. B——, Uncle Bob, please tell him we would like to see him here again very much; and, Uncle Bob, you have a very kind invitation to visit us. You and Mr. B—— can come together. Your loving niece,

CLARA.

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—Pa takes the *Western Methodist*. We received it yesterday. Your column is read by us little folks with great interest. Uncle Bob, you make us feel very important. I had to get my Bible and look for that passage of

scripture. You did not quote it exactly right. I found it 15th chapter, 3d verse, of Proverbs: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Uncle Bob, I hope your letters may be found in the *Western Methodist* all the year. Uncle Bob, you intend to make us little folks study very hard—you give us so many "big" words to define. Please excuse bad writing. From your little friend,

MAGGIE.

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—Pa takes the *Western Methodist*, and I read your letters to children, and am delighted with them. In your letter No. 7 you quoted a passage of scripture, and said you wanted the children to hunt it up and see if you quoted it right. As I am a child, I will write and tell you that it can be found in Prov. xv. 3. You did not quote it exactly right. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." When we are enticed to do wrong, we should remember that the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. From your little friend,

LURAH.

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—I have just been reading your good letters to children in the *Western Methodist*, letter No. 4. I think that wise man must be King Solomon, who said positively once what flies would do "in a pot of ointment." Am I right, Uncle Bob? I love to read your letters when you ask us little people to answer questions and give the meaning of big words. I did not have time to tell what that big word meant—"concomitant"—but little Jennie, Addie, and T. G. P——, told you. I will be ready next time. I am nine years old, Uncle Bob. Yours truly,

WALT.

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—I have read your letters in the *Western Methodist* with great pleasure. I hope you will continue to write to us. I found the passage of scripture you quoted in the 15th chapter and 3d verse of Proverbs. It is: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Your little niece,

KATIE.

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—Pa takes the *Western Methodist*, and I have read all of your letters, and like them very much. You are not exactly correct in the verse you quoted. It is: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Prov. xv. 3. Hoping to hear from you soon, I am your little niece,

LULA.

You will observe that they all call attention to the quotation in letter No. 7, and the errors I committed. That's right, children. Those errors made by me will impress the passage more forcibly upon your minds. That is the way to make nice critics of you; but you had better look sharp, or I will catch some of you, like the school teacher does sometimes after you have gotten somebody to do your sums for you.

But I must close. Here are a few lines I want you to commit to memory. They are better than all our letters put together:

"Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

LETTER X.

Little Rena on crutches—"Cater Pillar"—Up the wrong tree
—A little girl that knows the commandments by heart—
Not going to die now.

DEAR CHILDREN:—I was thinking yesterday that I would not write any thing this week; but that thought was banished after reading a letter from little Rena T. A——, of Oxford, Miss.

She writes me that she has been confined to her bed with rheumatism ever since last November, and when the Sunday-school bell rings she creeps into the yard on her crutches, and looks at the little boys and girls going, and feels so sorry that she is not able to join them. Some of the little ones call to see her, and sympathize; but—I dislike to tell it—her teacher has never been to see her since her affliction. Is it possible? She says she enjoys my letters, and would feel sorry to open the *Western Methodist* and find that I had failed to write. I want all the little boys and girls in Oxford to go and see Rena. Tell her what was done, what you learned, and what the superintendent and pastor said; it will do her good, and strengthen your own minds.

I have received too many letters to publish this week. I will have to mention the names and make a few extracts only.

The first is from one who signs his name "Cater Pillar." He says he thinks he has had the pleasure of seeing me, and that I rode his father's horse from Brownsville, Tenn., last August or September; and he hopes the water from the well north of "Forkydeer" River permeated my wounded foot and restored it. He wants me to come again, if my visits are short, and assures me that he can always give me "Johnny Constant and Billy Reglar." That's as good as I want. But let me tell you: I never rode a horse from Brownsville, I never bathed a wounded foot in the water from the well beyond "Forkydeer." You are up the wrong tree, Mr. "Cater Pillar." But if you will drop me a line and give me the name of the gentleman who did ride the horse, I will show you the right man one of these days, perhaps.

Then comes one from Flora C. M——, post-marked Waterford, Miss. She is anxious to know who I am, and asks me why I don't tell. Then she goes on, writes a very sensible letter, and asks me to call at her house, if I ever travel through North Mississippi. She promises me fried chicken, and thinks, if I am not a preacher, that I am as good as one, but fails to tell me who she is and where she lives. I won't know, Flora, where to go, unless you can make arrangements for the chickens to crow when I'm about.

• The next is from Walter. He lives at Stanton,

Tenn. He says his school advantages have been slim; yet he writes a good letter, and proves to my satisfaction that he is a reader of the Bible. He says there are eleven commandments, and tells me where to find them. I want each one of you to get your Bible or little Testament, and read the eleventh one. You will find it in the 13th chapter of John, and at the 34th verse. You must read it carefully, as I want the sentiment it contains deeply and indelibly fixed in your mind. Then get the dictionary, and look up the meaning of that word "indelibly."

I think it is next to the greatest of all the commandments. I think so because the Master said so. Can you tell me where? What is as strong as love? The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians that it never faileth. Let us look at it a little. If you love one another, you will honor one another, you will protect one another, you will do all you can to make one another happy. Then don't you see how easy it will be to love God? If you love him, you will keep his commandments, and be entitled, according to his promise, to a long life upon earth, and in the world to come life everlasting.

One of my little correspondents—Cora—says she knows the commandments by heart, and that there are ten of them. Won't she learn something when she gets our letter? That is what we write for. It would be of no use, if information was not given. I think it is very well to commit a little Scripture to memory every week, and think about it; strive to understand it, ask mother or some one

else to explain, but don't try to show how many verses you can crowd into your little minds—it will do you no good. Take up the commandments, for instance, and read them one by one, and ask yourselves this question: "Do I know what that means? or am I like a parrot, that can say a great deal, but understand nothing?"

I remember reading, a year or two ago, of a little boy who must have read them understandingly—at least one of them. He was very ill. The doctors pronounced his case hopeless, and told his father and mother that he would die in a few hours. He was an intelligent and, I think, a religious boy. So his mother thought she would tell him what the doctors had said. She did so. The little fellow looked up and said: "Mamma, that can't be so." "Why not, my boy?" said his mother. "Because," said he, "God has said in the Bible, 'Honor thy father and thy mother, and thy days shall be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' Now, you and papa know that I have obeyed and honored you all my life, and I am only a little boy. The doctors are mistaken. God is not going to let me die now. I'm going to live a long time." Here the conversation closed. In a short time reaction took place, the crisis was passed, and he lived to be a man. That boy's faith was as genuine and as effective with God as was that of those three men who were thrown into the white-hot furnace by a certain king a long time ago. I remember reading an account of it, and I think it is one of the most interesting and thrilling descriptions upon record.

Hunt it up and read it carefully, and write me word where it is and what you think of it.

But see here, I am spinning this thread too long, and must clip it. Yet I have not noticed the letters of Willie Nunn, Thomas Martin, Charlie, Mattie Harris, J. R. Elmore, Mary E. Witt, and Joe Willie, all of whom have written in a style that does them great credit.

Since the above was written, I have received four more well-written and sensible little letters, from Lillie, A. F——, Campbell, and Cordelia. Cordelia is a Cherokee Indian. She writes from Webber's Falls, Cherokee Nation. One of my questions caused her and a friend of hers to read Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Solomon's Songs. She says she reads the Testament in school every day. I like the school where the Bible is read. To tell you the truth, I have not much use for any kind of an institution that excludes that book. I want the word of God to have free course and be glorified.

"By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honor, and life."

LETTER XI.

Walk up and pitch in—That word “can’t”—Yellow-backed novels—Book-sellers responsible—Self-help—Dr. Livingstone.

DEAR CHILDREN :—When the time comes for me to begin my letter to you, every thing else has to give way. Indeed, this thing has become a part of my regular work; and while I never was fond of toil, yet, when it is to be done, I make it a rule never to parley, but walk up like a man and “pitch in.”

That’s the way I like to see people do. When they do that way something is going to be done. But show me a man, boy, or girl who stands off and begins to think how hard it is, and then says, “I don’t think I can do it—I almost know I can’t,” and I will allow you to use my name as authority for saying that if any thing around either of them amounting to much is ever accomplished, somebody else will have to do it.

That word “CAN’T,” which you all hear and say so often, has gained more reputation than it is entitled to. It is like a good many people who pass for more than they are worth. I always do what I can to discourage that sort of thing.

Now, boys and girls, I want you to adopt my plan. When you have a hard lesson, or when pa and ma tell you to do any thing, never say, "I can't." Don't let that ugly word come into life until every resource has been exhausted; then when it has to come, clap your teeth on it and break its back. If you succeed, take my word for it, one of your strong enemies will be disabled.

I have written you ten letters before this one, and in them I have made efforts to say something to interest and instruct you. I have touched upon different subjects, and dropped a hint or so here and there. I want this time to call your attention to the character of your reading. There is a growing disposition among our little folks, and some not so little, to read wonderful stories, fairy-tales, and other volumes of trash with which the book-stores, parlor center-tables, and libraries abound, to the exclusion of almost every thing really valuable. I am sorry to know it. It is a bad sign. If I was a book-seller, I would be very careful about the character of the books I sold. Everybody living in a community is responsible, to a greater or less extent, for every bad thing that is done there. Every one of us exerts an influence for good or evil. The boy who has read one of those yellow-back novels, full of great big lies, telling how many lions a fellow eighteen years old killed with a walking-stick, or how many wild Indians he whipped with a ramrod, then goes to school thinking he is somebody, and concludes to distinguish himself by getting into a difficulty, and, as he says, "cleaning out" two or

three of his school-mates, is exerting an evil influence. The girl who has read a romance in which she was told of a wonderful female with golden tresses and sylph-like form, who rode a wild horse without any bridle, and made her escape through a wilderness from a band of highwaymen, or some other "yarn," and then spends the rest of the night, or it may be the rest of her life, dreaming and wondering if some good fortune will not turn up, forgetting that she was created for a purpose, and that she should be preparing herself for filling her place in the world—that girl is exerting an evil influence.

Now, children, avoid novels—do n't read them. There are so many books of a substantial kind, written for your benefit, that you can read every spare moment until you become old, and then you will not have read half of them.

There is a little book just issued from our Publishing House, written by Mr. Smiles, called "Self-help," that will interest you, if you will read it. I have just finished reading it myself, and I know more than I did before by a great deal. Some of the celebrated characters of the world in science, literature, and art are talked about, showing what can be done by those who try. If you read the book, when you get to that part that speaks about the great missionary, Dr. Livingstone, I want you to read one passage particularly. It begins in the middle of the sixth line from the bottom, on page 264, and ends with the thirteenth line on the next page. He was a factory-boy, and had to be at his loom every morning by six o'clock. With the first

money earned he bought books — one of them a Latin grammar. He would carry it with him to the mill and set it up before him on the spinning-jenny he worked, and as the machinery passed back and forth he would read his lesson. When he was not at work he improved his mind reading various books, and I see the writer was careful to put these two words in: "EXCEPT NOVELS." I am glad he did it. He worked on, read on, studied on, until, like a great oak, he towered up in the world and cast his shade in every direction. His name will not die while men live to proclaim it.

No boy or girl who is an habitual reader of fiction ever will be great. Such never can have a correct or satisfactory idea of life and its obligations. They go to swell that already large class of dissatisfied and disappointed loungers and grumblers who make the largest part of the trouble we have in the country.

You may, perhaps, think I am talking too far ahead for children, but it is not so. I know you are to govern the country before long, and I want you to get ready for it. When I am old I want to see among the honorable names in the ministry, and in the records of the nation, some of those whose little letters I now have, and am going to keep among my relics until then. You need not think because your letters are not published that they are not highly appreciated, or that they are thrown aside. Not so. I prize them above any I get, and intend to keep them all. So you must not stop writing.

Even the editor said to me the other day, when I was telling him how well some of you wrote, that there were many of you that could write articles fit to publish. He didn't tell me to say any thing about it, but I thought I would just let you all know his opinion of you.

How many of you can tell me what is the beginning of wisdom?

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

LETTER XII.

Another Uncle Bob—The sermon—Leaving her religion at a boarding-school—Education without religion dangerous—Converted before they were twelve years old.

DEAR CHILDREN:—I rode several miles last Sunday week to hear “Uncle Bob” preach. I don’t mean myself, but another—a great big, tall man, with a round, full face, and a pretty little dimple in his right cheek. That makes him interesting, you know.

The sermon was delivered on a commencement occasion at a female college, and consequently was adapted to young people. It was such a good sermon I wish you all could have heard it. I will give you the words of the text and let you hunt it up for yourselves: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

He began by saying that he took dinner at a certain place not long ago, and toward the close of the meal, when the conversation was rather miscellaneous, he asked the gentleman to his right if he belonged to the Church. The gentleman replied, Yes. He then asked him if his wife was a member.

He said no—she left her religion at a boarding-school. “Uncle Bob” dwelt upon this appropriate point awhile with fine effect. That was introductory.

The whole sermon was interesting and pointed, but there were three divisions I want to call your attention to more particularly: 1. Get religion. 2. Be filled with religious knowledge. 3. Always abound in the work of the Lord.

By getting religion he meant being turned in heart, purpose, and life to Jesus. This is absolutely necessary for any kind of satisfactory success in life. It is the first step to be taken toward accomplishing the great end of living; without it life's cares and responsibilities are burdensome, and often become intolerable. The Bible says: “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” Some people think that children cannot become religious, and hence never say any thing to them about it; and it is sometimes the case that children wonder at it, and reason about this way: If all are born in sin, I must be a sinner; if I am a sinner, I must repent. If these things are so, why is it that father, mother, and friends take no interest in my welfare? Some of our greatest men were converted to God before they were twelve years old—Bishop Andrew, Dr. Green, Bishop McTyeire, and a host of others I will not mention. These are enough for the present. The truth is, children, if you ever accomplish much you must begin early. Solomon, the wisest man, knew what he was talking about when he wrote the

twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes, which begins with these words: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

After your little hearts and minds have been turned to Jesus, then you must be filled with religious knowledge; you must not only read books which tell about God and his government, the philosophy of religion, and all that, but you must read and study the Bible. That is the fountain, and if you want pure truth, there is where it must be sought. The Bible teaches you all about your bodies; it tells you how you are to keep them. It tells you all about your hearts; how deceitful and wicked they are. It tells you a great deal about your souls, their value, their immortality, and the great price that has been paid for their redemption. It tells you about Christ, your Saviour, his life, his death on the cross, his resurrection from the grave, his ascension into heaven, and his coming again at the end of the world. It tells you about heaven, about the sun, moon, and stars; about the earth, what is to become of it; about the sea, and sea-monsters; about earthquakes, storms and tempests, rain and hail, fire and snow, horses and cattle. In fact, it tells you about every thing. It is the only book that contains every thing. Whoever reads and studies it with a prayerful heart will know something about all that is worth knowing.

Then, besides all that, there is a necessary "concomitant." Hear it: Always abound in the work

of the Lord. Nothing gives as much satisfaction at the close of the day as the thought, I have been abundant in labors to-day; I have tried to do my duty; I have been careful not to offend by word or deed; I have done offices of kindness; I have encouraged the despondent; I have helped the needy; I have visited the sick; I have tried my best to overcome pride and vanity; I have fought against my prejudices; I have subdued anger; I have encouraged and exercised broad and liberal views; I have been willing to give everybody a chance; I have been polite; I have shown special kindness to inferiors; I have taken no advantage of the necessities of others. I have thought of my responsibility to God, and about the time when I shall give account of myself to him; I have been faithful to all trusts committed to me; I have been diligent in business. In a word, I have striven to work out my salvation. All that is what I would call abounding in the work of the Lord.

Now, my dear children, I want you to think over what I have written, and if you ever go to a boarding-school, don't leave your religion there when you come away. The community must needs watch a highly educated young man or woman without the fear of God. He or she is dangerous. With religion, either might be compared to a large, substantial, and elegantly finished steam-engine, with plenty of steam, and a competent and faithful engineer, and while it dashes fearfully along, looking as if it might have come from the infernal regions, people are not afraid as long as they know that true

man stands at his post, with hand upon the throttle; because he understands his business, he has every thing in subjection, and can transport his tons of freight and thousands of passengers in perfect safety. It is just so with the fear of God and learning. I don't care how much you know, if you are religious—the more the better.

Since writing the above, my anonymous correspondent, Flora C. M——, who resides near Waterford, Miss., has written another letter, now before me. She is still anxious to know who I am, and comes a little nearer telling me who she is, but not exactly. I shall have to get "Uncle Tuggle" to tell me. Here is what she says:

I live four miles south-west of Waterford, Miss. If the chickens don't crow, the guineas will be sure to hollow "circuit-rider" when they see you coming. Now, Uncle Bob, if you don't tell me who you are, I intend to ask Uncle Tuggle, for he comes to our house sometimes. Give my love to Aunt Bob and all the little Bobs. Yours affectionately,

FLORA C. M——.

Another of my little friends wants me to tell her who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes. I will say something on that subject next time.

"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee; she shall bring thee to honor, when thou dost embrace her."

LETTER XIII.

Mistaken in his man—Pippin apples—The old saddle-bags—
The break of day—Who the preacher was—Legh Richmond.

DEAR CHILDREN:—I think, as a general rule, apologies are poor things, but sometimes they are due and should be made. In view of what I am going to write this week, it would be proper for me to make an apology to you; hence I will make it. Pardon me, then, for the style and matter of this letter. I would not write thus if a couple of questions had not been asked which, in my judgment, seem to require it. I am inclined to the opinion that much older heads suggested and framed them than those whose names and ages they bear. However, a few things in regard to them may be profitable to us all. Men and women are children, only of larger growth, that's all.

The first question is asked by my little friend "Johnnie," 'way over yonder at Bentonville, Ark. After writing a long and interesting letter, telling me the meaning of that big word, "indelibly," and where to find the account I alluded to some weeks since, in regard to those three men and that furnace, and how long the *Western Methodist*, some years ago the *Memphis and Arkansas Christian Advocate*, has

been a regular visitor at his father's home, he says that he thinks he gave me some pippin apples last year at Conference, also one apiece for the children, and that I had about as many as I could well carry when each child's name was reported. My little friend is mistaken in his man. I never was at Bentonville. He never gave me any pippin apples; but I will say this: whoever it was that did get the apples has nothing to boast of over me when it comes to children; and I will now notify Johnnie that if he expects to send one apiece all round next fall, his mother will have to "do up" his father's shirt in paper, because the old saddle-bags will be full.

But the question. Johnnie wants me to tell him the meaning of the words, "Aijeleth Shahar," which occur in the beginning of the 22d Psalm.

I would remark first, that the words are Hebrew, and supposed to be the title of that writing. The first word, literally, means a hind—a female deer; the second is derived from a word which means to cleave, split, break. Hence the translators and other Bible critics have rendered it the dawn. When we see the first gray streaks of light shooting up all along the horizon, breaking, cleaving, or splitting the darkness, we say the dawn appears—day is breaking. In view of these facts, the commonly-received opinion is that the words, taken together, mean "the hind of the morning," although it must be confessed the matter involves critical uncertainty. The Rev. W. L. Bevan, in "Smith's Dictionary," thinks it probably refers to a tune of that name, like

Arlington, Shirland, Old Hundred, and others, in our day. It is a matter, however, of small importance. The psalm itself, depicting as it does the deep distress and agony of soul of the subject—CHRIST—all on account of man's transgression, is what should more particularly engage our thought.

I have no objection, however, to your asking such questions. I will always take pleasure in giving you the result of my investigations. I have my Hebrew Bible, Lexicon, and other books of reference quite convenient.

Another of my correspondents, "Sallie Kit," wants to know who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes.

The word "koheleth"—meaning preacher—introduces the book in the Hebrew Scriptures. It comes from another word, "kahal," which signifies to convoke, or call together. The words which follow, or the subject-matter of the book, is what the preacher said, and is denominated "words of the preacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem." The preacher was king himself. This would be sufficient to fix the authorship; but we need not depend entirely on it, for other evidences are abundant throughout the book to fix it upon Solomon. You know the Lord had said that Solomon was to be the wisest man that had lived or ever would live. He was also to be exceeding rich. I will now quote a few passages from the book itself, which it seems to me would be applicable to no one else. First, then, in chapter i., verse 16: "I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than *all they* that have been

before me in Jerusalem." Again, in chapter ii., 4-10: "I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and orchards, and planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits; . . . I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me; I got me men-singers and women-singers; . . . also musical instruments of all sorts. So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me." Again, who ever had greater reason to utter that sad complaint recorded in the 7th chapter and 26th verse? Then, those words in the 9th and 10th verses of the last chapter could belong to none but him: "And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words; and that which was written was upright, even words of truth." Hence, says Mr. Benson, the book has been ascribed to Solomon, and most justly, by the far greater part of interpreters, both Jewish and Christian. In many respects it is a remarkable book, and contains much that it would be well for us all to ponder, especially the conclusion. For all who are to become teachers, for all who are tangled with the controversies of the present, there are no better words to be remembered, viewed in relation to their immediate application. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil."

Now, children, this letter is longer than you may like; but I do not feel satisfied unless I can throw in something 'worth remembering. You who have living parents do not appreciate their value as you will after they shall have gone; consequently I feel that it is quite pertinent frequently to remind you of your duty. If you want to spare yourselves days, and it may be years, of sadness, take care how you treat father and mother. In my reading the other day, when I had a few spare moments, I came across this little piece, said to have been written by Legh Richmond. If you forget all else in this letter, try and remember this; cut it out and pastè it in your hats. Here it is:

If you perceive that any thing in your ways makes your parents unhappy, you ought to have no peace until you have corrected it; and if you find yourself indifferent or insensible to their will and wishes, depend upon it yours is a carnal, disobedient, ungrateful heart. If you love them, keep their commandments; otherwise love is a mere word in the mouth, or a notion in the fancy, but not a ruling principle in the heart. They know much of the world, you very little; trust them, therefore, when they differ from you, and refuse compliance with your desire. They watch over you for God, and are entitled to great deference and cheerful obedience. You may easily shorten the lives of affectionate and conscientious parents by misconduct, bad tempers, and alienation from their injunctions. Let not this sin be laid to your charge.

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

LETTER XIV.

The standing collar—The miller—How I got on the right side of him—The split top—The kite season—Mary Jane—Going to church—The council of war—Come out of those sideboards.

DEAR CHILDREN:—I am quite unwell this week—something is wrong about my right ear. If it were not so great a pleasure for me to hold converse with you in this way, and if I was sure that you would not feel disappointed, I would not write. But so many letters have come begging me to continue writing, that I feel constrained to drop you a few lines any way. You will remember that I promised a week or so ago to say something about my first experience with a standing collar. My young friend, L. B. Frayser, near Richmond, Va., wrote me a good letter last week, and calls my attention to the promise, and says he was impatient to hear about “Snug.” For fear he may become more so about the collar, I think I had better tell about it now.

The fashionable world is like a great wheel, such as they have at the back part of grist-mills in the country. You know that they are huge, and have boxes in place of paddles. I believe the millers

call them buckets. The water, rushing over the wheel, fills these buckets, and makes it revolve, or turn. You may go into the mill, and every thing is in motion, and unless you are better informed than I was when a boy, you will be puzzled to know what causes it. I was not long in finding out, you may be sure. I always was very curious to find out things, and the reason of them, and when I didn't know I asked. I used to watch the countenance of the old gentleman that kept the mill where I used to go, and I could tell exactly when to stop interrogating him. I used to study how to keep him in a good humor with me. I found that good behavior, mixed with some nice apples, cherries, or a bunch of flowers, worked like a charm. But it is due to him to say that good manners—acting the gentleman—went farther with him than any thing else. It seemed to me that he would take more pains to adjust the bag on “Snug’s” back for me than for other folks. He used to carry me around and explain things. By this means I soon understood matters; and since I have become a man I have compared myself and other people to a mill. My outer body is the building, all the inner apparatus the machinery. My will is the great wheel; health and strength furnish my will with power to control the operations of, not only my body, but my mind. So you see that all human beings have the elements within them which constituted them, originally, moral and free agents. Thus you see everybody is responsible for his or her actions.

But you will no doubt be wondering what all

that has to do with the collar. You know when the wheel of which I spoke begins to turn, one box goes down and another comes up. It is just so with the fashions—they come in, have a short run, and are over. In fact, this thing we call fashion seems to run through all circles, specially in cities. It goes down even to the boys and girls—instead of calling it fashion, they have seasons. For instance: there is the marble season, when every boy is almost beside himself about marbles. He can discourse admirably about how many agates, stripes, whites, bull-eyes, etc., he has. Soon this fashion or season passes, and is followed by the top season. Every boy has a top, and you may see ten or a dozen of them make a great ring right in the way on the street, and begin a game they call “plugging.” One lays his top in the middle of the ring, and the others wind up theirs and throw at it, and it is sometimes the case that a little fellow, that don’t know as much as the rest about such things, lays his top down and gets it split, or otherwise ruined. He goes home with a heavy heart, but he is wiser. He has been buying knowledge. Then comes the kite season, the hoop season, and so on.

The changes in wearing apparel, with a few exceptions, are about the same. It has been so ever since I could remember, and I suppose will continue.

People love to follow the fashion generally, and those few who do not, consider themselves about out of the world. Many times when pa’s purse is low, and he insists that the last-year’s bonnet is nice enough, Mary Jane begins to pout, and says: “Why,

la! that old thing has gone out of fashion several months ago." Pa says: "Well, daughter, it costs too much to keep up with these things; I can't afford it." Then comes the all-prevailing argument from Mary Jane: "One might as well be out of the world as out of the fashion." I have sometimes thought that some young girls, and their mothers too, would rather embarrass the father all through life than not keep up with that intolerable bore called fashion, style, etc. I trust, however, that my little readers will not follow in the track of such people.

Remember that it is not the clothes that constitute the man or woman, but a cultivated, refined, well-informed mind. Well, now for the collar.

"George" and I were great cronies, you know. We lived near a village where there were a great many girls. We used to go to preaching there sometimes, and then go home with somebody. We felt like we were men. Standing collars were then in general use. "George" and I were "hurtin'" to put them on, but we felt ashamed, and more than once we started from home determined to make our *début* in town with them; but no matter how we argued as to the right we had to wear them, and that we didn't care for anybody, and that we looked as well in them as the most of folks did, and all that, our courage generally failed just as we reached the last big tree before getting into town. Here we stopped and held a council of war. George thought he would go it any way. I came to the conclusion that we were a little ahead of time, and proposed

to put the matter off just one more week. I think that was a great relief to George, and although he made out that it wasn't, his collar was about the first that was turned down. If I remember right, the next time, starting with our standing collars on, we managed to get to the church with every thing in "*statu quo*," but somehow or other we couldn't get in. Some mischievous boy would cry out, "Come out of those sideboards," and as we were anxious to do so any way, a suggestion of that sort was all that was necessary. We came out about as soon as we could run our fingers around our necks. We kept on trying, however, and at last we made it—and to-day I am wearing a "standing collar."

Now, boys and girls, if you want to do any thing, just make up your mind to do it—keep at it, and you will succeed. If a boy will begin to drink, and keep at it, he will make a first-class sot in a few years. If he will begin to lie, steal, and be disobedient to his parents, and keep at those things, he will make a deep-dyed criminal, and if he misses the gallows he will come to some other violent end, and that, too, before a long time. Cultivate the good that is in you, children, and crush out the evil. I know it is a fight, but the consolation is, you will be sure to win the day if you undertake the work in the fear of God. Pa and ma will explain that part of this letter that you do not comprehend—ask them to do it for me.

I have received many interesting letters this week—another from Cordelia, the Indian girl. She is

vastly mistaken if she thinks I do not claim kin with her. I claim kin with everybody, but the actions of many oftentimes make me wish I wasn't kin to *them*.

"A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast."

LETTER XV.

Flashing and sizzin'—A million dollars—The phlebotomists—
A bee-line—No excuse.

DEAR CHILDREN:—I did n't get much sleep last night, because yesterday was the glorious old Fourth of July, and I found the boys something like I used to be—fond of shooting fire-crackers, “spittin’-devils,” sky-rockets, chases, and the like—and they kept it up until a late hour. I have long since lost all taste for such things, and to have them popping, flashing, and sizzin’ around me to so great an extent “sorter” frets me, and makes me wonder why the boys do n't save their money to buy something that will last and be useful. I have no doubt a million dollars were spent yesterday in the United States in celebrating what is called “Independence,” a something that does not exist.

Suppose that money had been spent in doing good, how much could have been done? One hundred churches, worth ten thousand dollars each, capable of accommodating fifty thousand people at preaching and one hundred thousand children at Sunday-school; or it would have endowed a university, where generation after generation could be

educated; or it would have built a work-house—something that should be in every city—a place where all the street-beggars, and others without employment, could be placed and made useful; also an asylum for drunkards.

But no doubt you will say, "Uncle Bob is an old foggy, and we young folks must sow our wild oats before we can think of such things as he is talking about." Let me tell you what the Apostle Paul said about that thing of sowing, not only wild oats, but every thing else. I will not tell you where it can be found, but leave you to hunt it up and report to me by letter. Here it is: "Be not deceived: God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." So you see sowing is not all that you will have to do; you will have to reap. Now, I want the young folks to sow such things, and in such a way as that they will not be ashamed of the crop when they go to reap.

Another reason why I did not sleep was, the "phlebotomists" (another big word) were after me in force. I don't mean bed-bugs, because I was at home, and my wife considers it a part of her religious duty to examine the beds every morning. She says she does not think there is any excuse for the residence of such garotters, as Josh Billings calls them, in a house where there is even one woman. I know she is sensible, and I do not hesitate to indorse what she says.

Those that were after me are called mosquitoes, and you know they are on the wing and can't be controlled. The only way you can get rid of them

is to get under a bar. We haven't put ours up yet, so I was kept busy slapping and fanning the most of the night.

Did you ever think how annoying a little thing could be? I remember the time when one bald-faced hornet could whip me in less time than you could say "Jack Robinson." I have stirred their nest before now, and have seen an old fellow start for me fifty yards off. He would come tolerably straight, I thought, and would pop me on the forehead, or on the temple, and then fly off, as if he had done something smart—as much as to say, "There now, you take that, and let me alone." Generally I acted upon the suggestion—at least for a time. I have wondered since if the expression, "a bee-line," did not have its origin in a circumstance of that sort. Who knows?

Well, here I am with a pile of letters before me from the children, about as thick through as fifty *Sunday-school Visitors*. Each one interests me, and if there were not so many, and so much, I would have them published. Two young ladies living in Texas write on the subject of painting and powdering, and say they never expect to do any more of it. They are sensible, willing to be governed by reason, and will be sure to make ornaments in society. Then there is one from Mary E. Hagler, a thoughtful girl. She says I must write for at least twenty thousand children every week, and that one copy of the paper goes to her father's house and is read by seven or eight; so, if we count five readers to each paper, over thirty thousand read my letters.

That startles me, and suggests that I should be very careful what I write. O if I can only induce some of those thirty thousand to do good! Yes, if I can make one good impression on them, how much I will have accomplished! I shall be paid in full for all it cost me. I am trying to sow seed that will come up in eternity, if not before.

This is a scattering letter, I know; but, rather than disappoint you altogether, I will let it go.

"But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

LETTER XVI.

Death of Charlie Baird—His letter—More little graves than large—"God moves in a mysterious way."

DEAR CHILDREN:—If you will look among the obituaries in last week's paper, you will find one signed "John S. McGowan." It concerns the sudden death of Charlie T. Baird, one of my readers; and, although I never saw him or heard of him until after his death, I was made to feel very sad under the circumstances. It seems that he had been very much interested in my letters, and had written one to me, which he designed mailing the day he was drowned. It has been sent to me by his father, and as it is perhaps the first and the last he ever wrote while in the flesh, I will insert it just here:

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—I have been thinking for some time I would write you a letter. I live near New Castle, in the bounds of the Whiteville Circuit. My pa is a subscriber to the *Western Methodist*, and has been for some time. I get impatient waiting, sometimes, for the next number, so anxious I am to read your letters, and also those of the little boys and girls. In your letter No. 11, at the conclusion, you asked how many could tell you the beginning of wisdom. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding

have all they that do his commandments; his praise endureth forever." You will find it in the Psalms—cxi. 10. I think I know who "Uncle Bob" is. Am I not right in saying he is ———? I am fourteen years old, and have n't had the school privileges of many of your little writers.

CHARLIE T. BAIRD.

Brother McGowan says he was truly an amiable character. He was affectionate and obedient. Truthfulness was a prominent trait in his character. There was no discount on Charlie's word. He attended Sunday-school, and was a member of the Bible-class. His father is a doctor, and hence has to be away from home a great deal. Charlie attended to the business pertaining to home matters like a man. Considering these features of superiority, is it strange that everybody that knew him admired him, and that he should have entwined himself around the hearts of his parents?

I know it is hard to give up such a son; but O how large the field for consolation! He was just the boy to die; he will help to swell that already large number that make the life beyond so happy and desirable.

We have, as a general thing, false views in regard to what we call death. We feel and act as if it was the end; and often we hear the expression, "O I shall never see my dear child again!" We forget that life is a warfare, and that every step therein is a hand-to-hand conflict; and that often we are standing guard at very dangerous points, where sharpshooters are on the alert, anxious to destroy us. We forget that life is a preparation state for

the development of those elements of character necessary to the proper appreciation of the relations of the other life. We forget that it is a school, and that it do n't take every scholar just so many years to graduate. We forget that not even the little sparrows, so thick in some parts of the old country that there are organized clubs to kill them, do not fall without the notice of God; and that the very hairs of our heads are all numbered.

But, says one, you wrote us some weeks ago that a character such as Charlie is described to have been has a guarantee of long life. Yes, I did; and it is true. It is the rule God has made; but often, for wise purposes, an exception is introduced that in no wise conflicts, when understood. For instance, when Christ turned the water into wine at that marriage in Cana of Galilee, it was contrary to all established natural law then or now known. Nevertheless, he did it. When he called the putrefying body of Lazarus from the grave; when he met the sorrow-stricken widow of Nain going out to bury her son, and stopped the procession and said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise; and he that was dead sat up and began to speak;" when he fed five thousand men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes, and, after all were satisfied, the fragments filled twelve baskets—these and numerous other things, called miracles, were all contrary to the laws of nature, as we understand them. Nevertheless, Jesus did them; and O how valuable and comforting they have been to millions of poor, distressed human hearts!

We should never lose sight of the fact that all we have and are is under the eye of a God who is too wise to err and too good to do wrong. It is often the case, as the poet expresses it :

God moves in a mysterious way
 His wonders to perform;
 He plants his footsteps in the sea,
 And rides upon the storm.

.
 Blind unbelief is sure to err,
 And scan his work in vain;
 God is his own interpreter,
 And he will make it plain.

Dear children, death lurks in every flower; and while it is generally understood that the old must die, the fact that over half of the entire human family do not live to be over seven years old seems to be overlooked. I had occasion to go to "the city of the dead" a few days ago, and while there I meditated a little upon this subject, and then thought I would notice the graves. There were different lengths—more short than long, however; so my conclusion was that the greater part of all who sleep there are safe. Many were "taken from the evil to come;" others had fought a good fight and were ready to be offered.

When I see a child lowered in the grave, I think about how much it has escaped—how much temptation, how much uneasiness, how much trial, how many conflicts, how much disappointment, how many failures, how many missteps; then, on the other hand, how much it has gained—the society

of the just made perfect, an exemption from sickness and sorrow, and a thousand other ills to which flesh is heir! Then I thank God for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men.

The lesson to be learned, my dear children, by Charlie's sudden death, is the importance of living so that death cannot surprise us, although it come as a thief in the night. Stand by the truth. Have a firm and fixed belief that God sent you into this world for a purpose, and let the fulfilling of that purpose be your constant study. Do n't be cowards, and desert your posts until the relief guard, with authority from head-quarters, relieves you from duty. Remember you are on trial, and God has declared that you shall not be tempted beyond what you are able to bear. "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"

This letter is, perhaps, beyond the comprehension of many of you, yet there is much of it you can understand, with a little explanation. Ask your mother to read it with you this week; next time I will try and do better.

"As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children."

LETTER XVII.

Getting into trouble—Tattlers—Got a thrashing—The Jones boys—Jeremiah Snodgrass—Fat hogs—Adolphus Crookshanks.

DEAR CHILDREN:—I am very fond of reading the fifteenth chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Every time I read it I think I understand better what the great apostle teaches. The thirty-third verse has been ringing in my ears, and as it contains so much in a few words, and should be deeply impressed upon the mind of every one of my dear young friends, I will quote it: "Be not deceived; evil communications corrupt good manners." The truth of that declaration has been verified in thousands of instances. Many a boy and girl has fallen into serious trouble by associating with evil companions.

I remember when I was a boy of a difficulty I was once drawn into, and all by reason of bad company. Many of the boys and young men with whom I was acquainted were very wicked. They swore, told lies, chewed tobacco, and were guilty of other bad habits. I partook more or less of these, and tried to imitate them in chewing tobacco and swearing.

Fortunately for me I had several sisters, and they seemed to think they were in duty bound to tell every thing they knew on each other, and "me too." I never did like tattlers—don't like to hear brothers and sisters telling ma and pa of every little indiscretion, and sometimes adding more to it, just to get somebody a whipping. It shows a bad spirit—one that should be crushed. But when matters as serious as some that concerned me, and that are prevalent in this day as well, come to the knowledge of brother or sister, the fact should be communicated at once to father and mother.

My elder sister was faithful in this respect. One day when she was present I thoughtlessly uttered an oath. It shocked her refined sensibilities, and the first thing I heard was: "Never mind, young man, I'll tell father." That was enough for me. I knew what the result would be. I begged and pleaded with her, but it was of no use; she was as firm and as cold as a philosopher. Father detested wickedness in all its forms, and had no compromise to make with it; hence I knew it would go hard with me.

Father was teaching the school at that time to which we were going, and there was a "full house." He called me up in the presence of all, and took special care to have every one understand fully the nature of the case. I did not know then why he pursued that course. I wondered why he did not take me in a retired place to myself and settle with me there; but he had another end to serve, which is plain to me now, and which was wise in him. Other

boys were there, and he wanted to make an example of me for their benefit. I think the manner in which he disposed of the case made an impression upon the mind of every one present that is remembered to this day. He gave me what might be called a sound "lambasting"—just what he should have done. I promised to abandon the ugly, wicked, and ungentlemanly practice, and I did it; and to-day, boys, I cannot hear a man or boy swear without feeling like giving expression to a groan and sentiment of pity. I always doubt the truthfulness and sincerity of any one who presumes to strengthen argument by swearing.

Another thing: You will find in passing through the world a pretty large class of "busy-bodies in other men's matters." I believe the polite, or rather the fashionable, manner of designating them now is, "persons of an inquiring turn of mind;" or, in other words, they have curiosity fully developed. This manner of expression, I suppose, was adopted to take off the edge as much as possible from the apostle's manner of expressing the same thing. When you go from home, it is sometimes the case that you happen among one or more of these characters, and at once the inquisitors begin. They want to know how your father and mother get along, whether your mother's servants are hard to manage, or whether your step-mother treats you mean, and if your father allows you to play with the Jones boys, and if you do not think the Brown girls are slovens, and not the company exactly for you; how many new dresses your mother has bought

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this spring, and whether father makes a fuss when she asks him for money; or if your sister Mary is going to marry John Shackelford, and how you would like to have him for a brother-in-law, and if you knew he had false teeth, and wears a wig; and if you don't mind you will tell what you had for breakfast, dinner, and supper for the past week, and how it was cooked! Yes, children, there are persons of that sort. Be on your guard, therefore, when you hear any one asking servants or children questions, such as I have enumerated. Think of the thirty-third verse quoted in the outset. Father read to me about twenty years ago a scrap from a newspaper, that is just here in point.

It seems there was a boy who, for convenience, I will call Jeremiah Snodgrass. He carried his father's grist to a mill where there was one of those "busy-bodies," or inquisitive persons, say Adolphus Crookshanks, acting the miller. No sooner did the said Jeremiah get fairly into the mill than did the said Crookshanks begin his interrogatories. Jeremiah was determined that he would communicate nothing. So, in answer to every question he would say, "I don't know." Crookshanks was of an "inquiring turn of mind," and tried every way to "draw Jeremiah out," but it was "no go." Finally his patience gave out, and he angrily said to Jerry, "What do you know?" They were both near the door, where there were some fine swine. Jerry answered promptly, "I know that millers keep fat hogs." He then was silent again. Crookshanks paused a few moments—a long time for him; but he had received

a shock, and I suppose could n't help it. He recovered, however, and in the same tone as before said, "What *don't* you know?" "I don't know whose corn they feed them on," was the dry and prompt response of Jerry. Our miller subsided, and I have never heard of him since, except through his relatives, who are scattered all over this country.

"He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life; but he that openeth wide his lips, shall have destruction."

LETTER XVIII.

Waiting for something to turn up—"Greenleaf's Grammar"
—The twenty-dollar gold-piece—I was induced to hang on.

DEAR CHILDREN:—I know nothing but what I have learned. Some things I learned from books, some by observation, and some by experience. All I know has been attained by effort. Whatever is accomplished in this world, of consequence, is the result of diligence and labor. Every attainment costs so much, and there is no varying in the price. The law which regulates in this department is subject to no suspension.

I write thus because there is a large class of people that forget these facts; old men and women, young men and girls, are among the number. They are those "sit-still, do-nothing, clever, good-for-nothing folks" who are always waiting and hoping for the "good time that's coming." In other words, they are waiting for something to turn up, instead of laying hold and by earnest effort developing their capacity.

A great many people are utterly ignorant of their resources. What they could do would astonish themselves, if they would only put forth effort

enough to find out. How many illustrious examples of this truth I could mention! As I am reading again that book I called your attention to in a former letter—"Self-help"—and as the items I wish in this connection to use are so full and conveniently arranged, I will make an extract:

Take, for instance, the remarkable fact that from the barber's shop came Jeremy Taylor, the most poetical of divines; Sir Richard Arkwright, the inventor of the spinning-jenny and founder of cotton manufacture; Lord Tenterden, one of the most distinguished of chief-justices; and Turner, the greatest of landscape-painters. Shakspeare, whose mind was one of the most wonderful that ever shone in the world, is supposed to have been a wool-comber; his father was a butcher. Then from the common class of day-laborers came Brindley, the engineer; Cook, the navigator; Burns, the poet; Ben Jonson, who worked at the building of Lincoln's Inn with a trowel in his hand and a book in his pocket; Hugh Miller, the geologist; Harrison, the chronometer-maker; and John Gibson, the sculptor. From the tailors came John Stowe, the historian; Jackson, the painter; Admiral Hobson; and Andrew Johnson, ex-President of the United States. The great John Bunyan was a tinker; Huntingdon, the preacher, was a coal-heaver; Bewick, the father of wood-engraving, was a coal-miner; Baffin, the navigator who discovered Baffin's Bay, that you all learned of in your geography, began his sea-faring career as a man before the mast.

So, you see, the great and the good—those who have helped forward the ages in science, literature, and art—were "not born with a silver spoon in their mouths," but came from the "rank and file;" and by dint of labor, patience, perseverance, and energy, raised themselves to posts of honor and distinction, and have had their names pass into history,

written upon the records of time's doings, and, after ages more shall have passed, there they will stand, as if "graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever."

The foregoing examples are for your encouragement.

I know how easily some falter and even faint by the way in the acquirement of education, character, etc.

I remember well when I was a boy how anxious my father was for me to learn. He was self-educated, and consequently felt more keenly the necessity of it. He often talked with me about his early life, and how he had to do. He generally had a task assigned him for the day—say a cord of wood to cut. He would work briskly, get through, and then find an old tree that had blown down, leaving a large hole at the roots. The winds carry leaves into all such places, making them very pleasant for a cold day. "In one of these cozy little nests," said he, "I have studied many a lesson." His parents were poor, and could not afford him light at night; so he would get down "on all-fours" before the fire. In this way he mastered a great deal, became educated, and taught others.

He was anxious for me to become a good grammarian. He once bought Greenleaf's large atlas-shaped grammar for me, and told me if I would master it he would give me a twenty-dollar gold-piece. I was delighted. You know how one feels when he gets a new book, don't you? I opened it; and O how nicely it was printed! how clear, and

fresh, and sweet! I snuffed it and snuffed it. Then the twenty dollars, how big it did seem! "almost as big as a cart-wheel!" I agreed to the proposition at once, thinking I would accomplish the task without much trouble in about fifteen or twenty days.

I made me a thumb-paper, vowed that I would not gnaw the corners like the rest of the boys did, and that nobody but myself should handle it, and so on. O I can tell you I felt "some"! I moved off briskly. The first few lessons were so easy, I thought father had missed it in making me such an offer.

You know, when you get one page you turn over a new one with great eagerness, but soon find that there is no fun in it. That was the way it was with me while studying "Greenleaf." There were more rules and exceptions, and exceptions and rules, "than you could shake a stick at." There was one rule that I was a long time understanding. It is this: "Two negatives in the same sentence are equivalent to an affirmative." In order to impress it upon my mind, the teacher told me of a young man who was "dead in love" with a young lady, and asked her to "have him." She answered him, and, as he thought, refused him; consequently he showed signs of disappointment and sadness. As soon as she observed that, she laughed, and cited him to that rule in "Greenleaf." His uneasiness was all dispelled; and to this day I have never heard of any other good that rule has done.

After a little I came to what was called defective

grammar. That "stumped me." I wondered why they did n't make it all correct at first. I thought, if I was going to make a book, I would try and have it right, and not filled with mistakes. I did n't understand the secret then. How I did tug over some of those sentences! They were so near right that they did n't appear to be wrong at all. I was bothered. I scratched my head; I pulled my hair; I cried. I said I wanted to be a farmer; I did n't expect ever to be a teacher. I even said I did n't care anything about the "gold-piece," and I believed I would rather give it up. Father insisted; I protested. But finally, with the aid of some other little thing that it is not necessary for me to mention, I was induced to hang on. But if I had been a man, with the feelings I then had, and could have gotten hold of Mr. Greenleaf, he would not have made any more grammars.

There was one sentence that gave me a great deal of trouble. For the sake of variety, I will give it you for correction this time. "Do n't answer all at once," now; but let me see how many of you can, without help, correct it: "Several alterations and additions have been made to the work."

Now for a question in the Bible. You remember once when the disciples had "toiled all night and caught nothing," about day Jesus appeared on the shore, but the disciples did n't know him. He called them children, and asked them if they had any meat. They answered, No. He told them to cast the net on the right side of the ship, and they would find. They did so, and were not able to draw

in the multitude of fishes. That disciple whom Jesus loved, John by name, said to Peter, "It is the Lord." Peter could n't wait for the ship to carry him, but jumped overboard and swam to shore. Now, what I want you to tell me is, how many fish were in that net?

"The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat."

LETTER XIX.

A fine dog—His master—Accused of stealing—How the matter was settled—Going in the back way—Here's to you.

DEAR CHILDREN :—"Abstain from all appearance of evil." This exhortation was forcibly illustrated in my own case about a year and a half ago.

I was in Memphis. Early one morning I started "up town," as the city folks say, and at the corner of Second and Gayoso streets I saw a Newfoundland dog. He was very large, and black "all over." I like a fine dog. Indeed, I like every thing fine. I don't mean fine in the commonly-accepted sense of that term, but neat, complete, substantial. I do not know whether I resembled his master, but in any event he noticed me about as soon as I did him, and showed signs of recognition. I felt like speaking to him and patting him on the head. So, without thinking of any thing save giving expression to my feeling of admiration, I extended my hand, snapped my finger, and said, "You fine fellow!" He seemed pleased, wagged his tail, and came to me. I gave him a pat or two, stroked his beautiful neck, and passed on. I had gone but a little way before he trotted past me as if intent upon some-

thing. When he reached Union street I think he turned as if going to Main street. I passed over, and before half the next square was made Mr. Dog trots by again. For the first time I thought he must be following me. Then I heard some one call him. I looked across the street and saw a gentleman who, I afterward learned, was his master. The dog went to him at once. I walked on and thought no more about the matter.

A few days after I was passing through the Beale street market. I stopped at the stall of a friend. He said that he had heard something about me, and felt it his duty to tell me of it. I said, "Certainly; let's have it." He said, "Do you know Mr. —, on Second street?" "Not personally," said I. "Well," said he, "the other morning when you passed he was at my stand. He asked me if I knew you. I told him, 'Yes.' Then he said, 'That man tried to steal my dog last week.'" My friend said he told him that he had known me a long time, and there must be some mistake about it. "No," said Mr. —, "I caught him in the act." I then explained the case to my informant, and determined to go and see the gentleman at once. I went to his office, asked for him, introduced myself, and told him my business. He "bristled" up a little, and intimated that he didn't care any thing about any one who would steal a dog. I felt deeply mortified, and told him that I had come as a gentleman to explain the matter, and if he would hear me I would do so. He calmed down, and we talked over the case. He said he saw me pat the dog, and saw him following me; and as he had been twice stolen,

the thought flashed across his mind that I was trying to steal him too. "Now," said he, "under the circumstances, don't you think I had room for my suspicions?" I thought of the words with which this letter begins, and while there was no foundation in fact for his suspecting me, yet the "appearance" might, perhaps, justify such an interpretation. This much I admitted, but assured him there was no such idea in my mind. He expressed himself satisfied, and there the matter ended. That man and I now live within a stone's-throw of each other, our families visit, and I really believe he would not be afraid to trust me.

Now, the lesson to be learned is this: We are here in this world where we are watched. All to whose notice we come labor to find us out. Being fallible, of course they can't do it altogether. The nearest they can come to it is to interpret our actions. Often they are narrow-minded, and blinded by passion and prejudice, hence they blunder fearfully in applying their best rule. This being true, how particular you and I should be! It is true God knows our hearts, and the true character of our intentions will be made manifest at last, but then you must not forget that scripture that says, "No man liveth unto himself." This teaches us that our influence is felt, and has more or less to do with the shaping of the character of others. I might say truthfully that our dress, our very walk in the street, our words, our actions, all give a touch somewhere to life's picture.

I want to call the attention of the boys particu-

larly to one point in this matter of influence. In cities, and country towns too, there are numbers of places called saloons; where nothing but whisky and other drinks are sold. Some of these places are kept very nicely. They have carpeted floors, frescoed walls, adorned with pictures, French mirrors, and all that. Every thing is enticing. Men and boys crowd into these dens of vice, fill their glasses, touch them together, and say, "Here's to you!" or something of that sort. I have been told that some men, ashamed to go in at the front door, are sometimes seen going in the alley-way—at the back door—men who stand high—Church-members; and soon you may hear Mr. Barkeeper discoursing upon the strait-jacketness of the Church, and in his talk will bring in Mr. So and So, a deacon, elder, class-leader, Sunday-school superintendent, who is in the habit of visiting his place, and will say, "That is the sort of a Christian for me; he's liberal in his views. I think if there were more men of his stripe in the Churches I'd join myself." There may be several young men who have been looking upon that deacon, leader, or Sunday-school superintendent, as their *beau ideal* of manhood, and perhaps have felt conscience-stricken time and again after having indulged in that way themselves, upon hearing that of him, or perhaps seeing for themselves, have never felt any more conscience upon the subject. They keep on in the "respectable way," as it is called, a few years, and then begin to drift, and finally are wrecked. Hence I would warn young men and women to beware of the example they set.

We must have an eye to the welfare of others, lest we prove stumbling-blocks in their way. Our trumpet must give no uncertain sound. In order, then, to have this sentiment fixed in your minds, turn these words over in your thoughts every now and then.

"Abstain from all appearance of evil. Do that which is lawful and right, and you shall save your soul alive."

LETTER XX.

The new baby—Keeping them back—"Splendid glad"—Taking a peep—Order No. 1—Importance of little things.

DEAR CHILDREN:—Did you ever have a "new baby" to come to your house? If you did, you know how it is. But no matter as to that—I want to tell you of one that came to our house the other day. It is a beautiful little girl, with black hair, dark-blue eyes, two pretty little ears, a sweet kind of little mouth, and a sort of pug nose. If you could have seen the other children around the crib, and heard their several remarks, you would have laughed. There were so many of them that I had to stand by and keep them back, so that the little miss could get air. I believe they would have about smothered her. One whom I will call Mag came into the room, and not knowing any thing about the baby's arrival, happened to stand near the crib. The baby made a little noise, just like they generally do, you know, when Mag stretched open her eyes, drew nearer, held one ear close down, and listened. Just then there was another noise. Mag jumped back, clapped her hands together, and said, "Hee, hee, it's a baby. O I'm so glad! Papa, do let me see it!" I turned back the coverlid, and sure enough

there was a live baby. Mag's eyes got bigger, she jumped and clapped more than ever. I said, "Mag, are you glad?" She answered, "O yes, papa, I am '*splendid glad!*'" I was kept busy till night answering questions and showing the little curiosity. I was glad when bed-time came. In the night, about twelve o'clock, I was aroused by something. What do you think it was? Why, one or two of the other children, Mag's sisters, were up looking at the clock. I suppose they were counting the hours till day. They wanted to know how long it would be before they could have another look. I enjoyed it, and gathered several ideas concerning human nature. There was no sleeping at our house that night, except "cat naps." We had some *catnip*, too. I wonder if there ever was a baby that did not have to drink its share of catnip. I reckon not. Morning came. The rising bell was rung, and if you could have seen the turning out and the rushing in, and listened to the pattering feet and jabbering tongues, you might have thought that several families were boarding with us. But that isn't so—all of them belong there. We had a time of it till breakfast, after which I gave some orders and left. When I returned at dinner-time, our oldest, a girl of about twelve years, had to have her "see." All the rest crowded up, too, as a matter of course. She looked only a moment at the face, and then began to search for the feet. Can you tell me why it is that young ladies always want to see a baby's foot? When they were found and brought to light, what a time was had over them! One said, "What a sweet lit-

tle foot!" another, "Just look at its big toe—aint it long and red!" another, "What a darling little heel!" The other—well, I forget what he said, but it was a good deal. All together, at once, "Mamma, let me hold it just one minute." There was no way to settle the matter but for me to issue order No. 1, which was to this effect: Neither of you are to handle or hold it until I say so; and as I am "boss" at my house, and everybody knows it, and never question my right, order and quiet was once more restored.

What I have been relating, children, made me think of the great importance of little things. I want you to think about it. That infant is very small, and entirely helpless, yet it created more excitement, and is more noticed, than all the people, old and young, that have visited us during ten years. It has more influence in the family than all of us put together—I might say, it is the queen of the household—everybody bows before its scepter, and renders willing service. That is more than can be said of Queen Victoria even. So, then, you must remember the little things—don't allow them to go unnoticed. They make up the happiness as well as the miseries of life.

That hive of beautiful and delicious honey, that some people are so inconsiderate and cruel as to kill those little manufacturing architects to get, was the work of bees not as big as the tip of my little finger. The honey was gathered by them from some of the smallest flowers. It was gathered, too, in little bits, "here a little, and there a little." And

if you ever saw a bee light upon a blossom and crawl in, you may have thought, as I have done many a time, Well, it does seem impossible that that is the way the honey I had for supper was gathered; yet it is a fact, nevertheless. Every little bee goes out and sips up some. They all fly back and put it together. They keep at this until the hive is full. I never heard of one of those little ones becoming discouraged and giving up. I read these lines about the bee when I went to school:

See how the little busy bee
Improves each shining hour,
It gathers honey all the day
From every opening flower.

Again, that fine silk dress of your mother's, and that pair of Sunday pants and jacket of yours, are made up of small threads.

Not long ago the cars on the Mississippi and Tennessee railroad were behind time. Upon inquiry it was ascertained that the caterpillars had stopped them. Just think of such small things blocking up the way of an engine capable of pulling tons and tons. One of them, or many of them, could not have done that, but when thousands of them wrapped themselves together and marched across the way of the rails, they stopped the rushing "iron horse."

The above examples may suffice to give you an idea of what I am trying to impress on your minds. Look after your little opportunities, your little advantages, your scraps of time; watch your little inclinations to do wrong; keep a bridle on that

mischievous member, the tongue. Look closely after your thoughts; do not undertake to parley with any bad ones, no matter how insignificant they may seem, for if allowed, they will pile themselves up, and up, until they get too much for you to manage.

Young people, improve the time; keep good company or none; exercise body and mind; keep at something; read good books or papers, or both; don't say, "I haven't time." You have spare moments every day. It is said of the late Hon. Abbott Lawrence, that when he was a clerk he kept a book in the dining-room of his boarding-house. Sometimes he had to wait a few moments for his breakfast. He spent that time in reading. He thought over what he had read on his way to the store. That is what I would call redeeming the time. Lawrence was one of the best-informed men of his day.

"Try," says Mr. James Hamilton, "what you can make of the broken fragments of time. Glean up its golden dust; those *raspings* and *parings* of precious duration, those leavings of days and remnants of hours which so many sweep out into the waste of existence. If you be a miser of moments, if you be frugal and hoard up odd minutes and unexpected holidays, your careful gleanings may eke out a long and useful life, and you may die richer at last than multitudes whose time is all their own."

I have received many letters during the past few weeks. One comes from Colorado. The writer says that he does not spend any of his money buying "fire-crackers," etc. He wishes I had been with him the

night of July 4. He could have showed me some mosquitoes—big ones. “Why,” says he, “a great many of them would weigh a pound.” I reckon it would take a great many, don’t you?

Then comes another from my little friend, Flora C. M——, of Waterford, Miss., telling me how many fish were in “that net;” also supplying the wanting preposition in the defective sentence. How prompt she was! I thought she had hardly received the paper, when lo! her letter appears. I like so much to see folks prompt. If you owe anybody any thing, children, “come to time;” it will help to make a good name for you. If you will learn to be prompt, upright, truthful, and religious, what a multitude of staunch and grand “old folks” will live here after I am gone! How good I will feel if I can help to accomplish that end!

“Walt” ——, of Oxford, Miss., wants to know what Adam and Eve were turned out of Eden for. I think eating of the forbidden fruit was the primary cause; “lest he should eat of the tree of life,” the secondary. If Adam and Eve had maintained their purity throughout their probation, I think it possible that they would have been permitted to eat of the tree of life, and thus would have escaped physical dissolution. But having become corrupt, it seems to me that God in mercy interposed, and prevented everlasting life from becoming the heritage of the parties in so degraded a condition, having in store for them and us a better inheritance.

“Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God.”

LETTER XXI.

The prodigal son—Father and mother know best—The naval officer—"Do your duty, sir"—Rifle in hand—"Jump overboard, or I will shoot."

DEAR CHILDREN:—This is my twenty-first letter—enough, with those I have received from you, to make a good-sized book. How many things have come to pass since I wrote my first! How many of my little readers have run the race of life, and to-day sleep under the cedars in some grave-yard! We that remain are moving on toward our end, and soon our school of discipline will close. Then we will know a great many more things than we do now. We will have God's providences explained. Then many a doting father will understand why it was that that manly boy was borne so early to the tomb. Many a widow will find out that God was kind and wise in removing her soul's delight, the partner of her youth, her earthly support. Many an orphan will understand why God suffered him to be left to the cold charities of this world. Many a man of business will understand his frequent and unforeseen reverses.

You and I are just like boys going to school who are in their A B C's. They sit and while away a

great deal of their time. By-and-by a class passes up to recite a lesson in some of the higher branches of study. The recitation is all jargon to them; they understand none of it. But time passes. They have learned to read. Their minds develop, and soon they are in that department themselves; truth after truth is revealed, and they understand what was before incomprehensible.

"What we know not now we shall know hereafter," is an inspired statement. The above is written because I know there are a great many boys and girls who are dissatisfied at home. They think their parents' discipline is too severe. They long to be beyond parental control. Some of them run away from home, and, like the prodigal son told about in the New Testament, get among the swine and feed on husks. I would like the young men and maidens to understand one thing above all others, and that is, father and mother understand this life better than you. They know what is best for you in most instances, and are anxious for your full development. They can make nothing by deceiving or improperly training you; that would all reflect back upon themselves. They may make many mistakes—you, if left to yourselves, would make more. This truth you will appreciate after a few years.

I read a little book once, called "Path of Life," written by Daniel Wise. Some things in that book made quite an impression on my mind. I was uneasy at home. I contrasted my condition with that of some others, and longed to be "my own man."

I fretted under home culture—thought father hard and unkind.

In that little book I met with a chapter that contained an incident which exactly suited my case. I read it, and thought; the more I thought, the more I wondered. After a little, I saw through the intention of the writer. It was to teach a great lesson; and while it was more particularly directed to comfort Christians under God's discipline, I thought it suited me. I will now, as near as necessary, relate the story for you—you can then make your own application.

A father took his son to sea. He was a celebrated naval officer, and wished to have his son become eminent likewise. He saw that it was necessary for the boy to become a thorough seaman. He must understand all a sailor's duty. When he went aboard, he very naturally expected, being the son of the captain, some indulgence. The change from a comfortable home, a kind mother, and accomplished sisters, to the stormy life of a sailor was great. He knew his father was kind, so he hoped to escape the *harder* duties. He was self-deceived. His father made no distinction.

In the darkness, he was ordered aloft. Once, when sea-sick, he asked to be excused. "Do your duty, sir," was his father's reply. As he mounted the mast that night, he for the first time doubted his father's love.

Like his shipmates, he committed misdemeanors, violated some of the rules. His inward thought was, "Father's captain—I will be indulged." He

was deceived again. He was punished more severely than any other lad. Again he doubted his father's love.

He one day climbed to the topmost mast of the vessel, and stood upright on the main-truck. Just then his father came from the cabin. The lieutenant, pale with fear, pointed up, and said, "Look, sir, at your son!" One glance of the eye, a rush into the cabin, a moment's time, and that father raised his rifle, and shouted, "Jump overboard, or I will shoot you!" The boy leaped into the sea, and was saved. He could not understand this treatment, and again doubted his father's love.

The four years' cruise is ended; the boy, almost a man, is again at home with his father. He is a skilled seaman. His father is as tender and affectionate as he was before the cruise. The youth wonders at the mystery of his father's conduct—so stern and severe at sea—so kind at home! What can be his real character?

The father and son are closeted. "My son," says the father, "you have no doubt wondered at some parts of my conduct. I compelled you to go aloft when sea-sick, I rebuked you for your faults. These things were painful for me to do, but your interests required them. I wanted to make you a finished seaman. The things you felt most keenly were the most necessary for your profit. When I threatened to shoot you as you stood on the main-truck, it was to save your life. Had I expostulated a moment, you would have fallen. I did it to save your life. I have aimed in all these things to benefit you."

With these explanations, do n't you see how readily all the former doubts of the boy were removed? I know you do. Some of you will even wonder at the mental stupidity which prevented him from entering at first into his father's wise designs.

Now, your parents are moved by the same kind of motives in your rearing; and instead of growling, and becoming dissatisfied, you ought to act more wisely, and say, "My parents know best."

God deals with us many times in similar ways. Good people cannot be always discovered by outward providences, or separated from sinners by *visible* signs of heavenly favor.

On the other hand, they are often sorely afflicted. I will give a few examples. Joseph was greatly oppressed; David was hunted like a beast of prey; Daniel was cast among the lions; the three Hebrew children passed through a furnace of fire; Job was an object of desolation; Jeremiah was thrown into a pit; Stephen was stoned to death by haters of the gospel; Paul had to carry a thorn in the flesh; John was an exile on Patmos; and Lazarus was a beggar and licked by the dogs.

Children, it is a good idea to read a little in the Bible every day. Everybody would be wiser and better by studying that book more. There would not be one-tenth the number of ignorant, fretful, despairing, woe-begone, faithless creatures in the world that there are, if that grand and glorious old volume was more generally consulted. Let me beseech you not to neglect it.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right."

LETTER XXII.

The house I was born in—"The old sweet-heart"—Cats after the milk—Murder will out.

DEAR CHILDREN:—The house in which I was born is still standing. Some few alterations and improvements have been made in it from time to time, but enough remains to mark distinctly its identity. It stands upon quite an elevation, and used to be surrounded by various kinds of trees. But trees, like everybody and every thing, have an end. Now, or rather a few years ago, when I was there, the shade was sparser.

One old tree, however, that was old when I was young, still stood in the back yard—an old cherry, about as big round as a hogshead. The fruit was very small, but very sweet—so sweet that it went by the name of "the old sweet-heart." Many a fine bunch have I had thrown from its well-laden boughs by the "boys," when they came in from the plows.

In the rear of the house, at each parlor window, there was a great big rose-bush that used to bear roses, some of which were as large as your biggest hand spread wide open. Hence that was a great

place for the "humble-bees" (according to the pronunciation of us children, "bumble-bees"), hornets, wasps, and yellow-jackets.

There are two kinds of "bumble-bees"—one has a white face, the other black. Those with white faces are very clever—they do n't sting a fellow; and besides, they carry a large sac of honey along with them—and it was the honey I was after. But the black-faced ones are grum and cross. You can't joke with them a bit. They retaliate every time. I have often seen, as I thought, a white-face fly amid the bush, with back to me. I, eager to capture it, would steal up, and, when I was right certain as to the kind, would grasp it with my naked hand. More than once I found I had the one I did n't want; and as I make it a rule to get rid of what I do n't want as soon as possible, I did not hesitate in any such case that I now remember of. I think almost any bee would, if it could reason, have appreciated my willingness and activity in the premises.

Say, boys, did you ever have a yellow-jacket up your breeches-legs? If you did, did n't you "spread yourself"? I imagine I hear you say, "I reckon I did." Yellow-jackets are little things, but they can make more fuss with a boy, and excite him more, than any thing else of the same size I know of, except a hornet—which, by the way, must be a second or third cousin of the yellow-jacket.

Well, let's return a little while to the old home. I said it stood high. It was one of the old-fashioned, hip-roofed houses, with a large and deep old

cellar under it, where they used to keep the milk, butter, cream, etc. The entrance was from the outside, at the west end of the house; two doors folded down, making a sort of half trap. It was customary to secure them with a padlock most of the time, especially at night. Sometimes, however, they were left open during the day, in order that the circulation should be free, and the atmosphere down there be purified.

About night you might have heard mother, if you had been there, telling Sarah, the milkmaid, to put an extra rock on the crock-covers next day, as the dogs or cats had been in the cellar and broken the morning's milk. Did it ever occur to you that the blame often rests where it do n't belong? "But," thought I, "if no harm comes to the dogs and cats, no one will ever be the wiser, and I will enjoy many a delightful swallow." But, children, somehow or other, every mean little thing I did was sure to be found out; and in spite of all I could do, I as often managed to let the "cat out of the bag" myself as any other way. Mother used to say, "Ah, my young man, I have caught you, have I? 'Murder will out.' " I used to feel very mean, and "they" used to tell me I looked sheepish. The feelings I had, the mortification growing out of the fact that I had abused my mother's confidence, bore upon me heavily. I concluded it would have been better for me to ask for what I wanted, instead of making it necessary for mother to secure the doors because I was about—to so act that she would have felt safe had she left home and forgotten to lock up, saying,

“There is no danger. My son is there; he will take care of every thing. ‘That precious boy,’ he is such a help and comfort to me!” How grand that would have been! It would have been just what nine out of every ten mothers would have said about such a boy. I know what I am talking about, because whenever I did right that was the way it was with me. It will be so with you. Do n’t do any thing mean, or little, or contemptible, and then try to cover it up. That will only make matters worse; for if you have a soul in you as large as one remorseful thought, you will not be paid for your trouble. It will lash you around until you will be glad to “’fess up.” It is noble to confess our faults; it is nobler still to forsake them; it is nobler still so to live as that there shall be no necessity for either. Do n’t let your conscience go to sleep, children; keep it wide awake. If you will, you need never fear being overcome. It is God’s watchman to warn you of danger. When well trained it makes no false alarms. So stand up and gird on your armor whenever it gives the signal.

“Lying lips are an abomination unto the Lord; but they that deal truly are his delight.”

LETTER XXIII.

A faithful recorder—Can't bribe him—Twenty lashes—Failed to keep count—Scattering things every which way.

DEAR CHILDREN:—I left you last week with an exhortation to keep an eye on your conscience. I told you also some little about our old homestead. I wish this time to dwell somewhat longer around that old spot, and give you an incident in which I figured largely.

I know of no subject more worthy to be considered, or that I feel more anxiety about, than the duty of children to parents. Sometimes I sit by myself and unstring my mind. Then I find it disposed to review the past. It seems to me to be like a book with every page full; here a pretty picture, there an ugly one—here a chapter of good deeds, kind words, willing obedience, there one full of cross words, ill-tempers, ugly actions, etc. I feel sorry when I come to an ugly page, and wish old Mr. Memory's recording secretary had left it out; but he had instructions to put every thing in, I suppose, and he did it. And while he seems to have dipped his pen in the brightest colors when he wrote the bad part, I am compelled to admit that he has dotted

every *i* and crossed every *t*. He is a faithful recorder. And here I will take occasion to say, that if you are tempted to do things that you would not like to go to the records, don't do them, because they will be sure to appear. The old secretary can't be bribed, because he is already immortal, and doesn't have any use for the stuff you could offer as a consideration.

The incidents I give from time to time I regard as so many features in life's journey — so many places in the road, to which it is necessary to call the attention of all who have to travel that way; so that, by taking heed, many a broken shaft, sprain, upset, runaway, and other disasters, may be avoided. I would not be willing to tell these things on myself but for the great love I have for you, and the earnest desire I have that you should pass through childhood and youth into manhood and womanhood with a record clearer and brighter than mine. Now for the incident.

The kitchen adjoined the house. It was on the east end, and built somewhat lower than the main building. We reached it from the dining-room by a flight of steps. There was one of those wide, old-fashioned fire-places in it that you could almost lay a fence-rail in without cutting it. Then at each end was quite an abutment that the black people call a *jam*. In each of these jams there were several holes they called *cuddies*, where they kept their old pipes and tobacco. They were good places, too, for the old women to "chuck" their knitting in when called on to do something else. Then I have

seen young chickens, just hatched, wrapped in an old flannel and tucked away in them of a cold night, just as cozily as you please. I can tell you those "cuddies" were good hiding-places, as we children soon found out; for many were the biscuits, walnuts, hickory-nuts, etc., that we hauled from thence. When we made a good haul, did n't we have a good time! Why, we would play housekeeping, and invite each other to dine. I tell you, we put on style! We made the most of it; but when the things were inquired after, it was the hardest matter to find out who "did it" that you ever heard of. "That was the other side of the question."

Rainy days, father used to read and write a great deal. He was a preacher, and of course, like all other preachers who do much in that line, he had to study. You know, when one wants to study, it isn't very desirable to have over five or six children around—one saying, "Mother, I wish you would come to Jane—she is pinching me;" another, "Tom, if you do that again, I'll call father to you;" another, "O mother, look at the baby—he's got your work-box down, and scattered your things every which way!" I say, it does not help one to study, these things do n't. So we children had a fire in another room—sometimes in the kitchen. Every thing was quite convenient about the place, except drinking-water. There was a well at the kitchen door, but the water was not very good; but about four or five hundred yards away there was a splendid spring, large and clear. The coldest day in the winter it smoked. Father used to fetch a

grunt when he got hold of the old stone pitcher, brimming full, just in from that spring. He loved good, fresh water. He used to say that it was the best drink in the world; and he always expressed his gratitude and pleasure at the fact that there was enough for all, and as free as the air. How strange, then, is it, boys, that men will leave this healthy, delicious, and free natural beverage, and pay large prices for all sorts of fiery mixtures that make them frown to swallow, and, after they have swallowed them, walk around staring at vacancy, with blood-shot eyes and bloated faces! They are being burned out. Boys, there are a great many men, old and young, walking around the streets of Memphis, and in the country, too, who are going down every day. Soon they will lie upon their beds of death, and then, perchance, will send for some preacher to baptize them. I want you to understand that I do not place any limit to the mercy of God; but those who do that way, according to my judgment, run a most fearful risk.

One day we were all in the kitchen playing. You may have noticed that some children seem to delight in tantalizing each other. They never are so well pleased as when they can tease and fret each other, and if possible excite some one to say or do something rash, and then run and blab it out the first chance they get, thus adding insult to injury. I want to warn you, my dear readers, against such a course. Do all you can to keep each other out of scrapes; do n't do any thing to get each other into them—that aint brotherly.

I was, as I said, engaged in play. One of my sisters came to the door and called me. I opened it, and there she stood, with that old stone pitcher, and in a commanding tone said, "Take this pitcher, sir, and go to the spring." I said, "I won't do it." She said, "You had better, if you know what's good for yourself, sir." I declared and vowed I would n't go. About this time I was quite worked up—not myself exactly. Then she said, "Father says you must go." Overcome as I was with anger, I gave the pitcher a jerk, and unthoughtedly said, "An old rascal!" While I was gone, she told on me. When I returned, father drank with as much gratitude, if not as much pleasure, as ever. He then invited me into the parlor, locked the door behind us, fastened the outer one, also the one leading upstairs. He then walked to the large fire-place, and looked up the chimney. About this time my feelings can be better imagined than described. He then told me what he had heard, and asked me if it was true. I said, "Yes, sir." He then asked me what I thought he ought to do about it. I told him I was sorry, but thought he ought to whip me. He then said, "How many lashes do you say I ought to give you?" I said, "I do n't know, sir; but I reckon, twenty." "Well," said he, "I do not want to cheat you; so, as I give them, you count." I thought that would be an easy matter, but it was the hardest job I ever undertook. I broke down about the third lick. I was perfectly willing to leave the whole matter with him. Suffice it to say, he was much more merciful to me than I was to myself. He did not give me

twenty, or the half of it. If any of you think it is easy to count and be whipped at the same time, I wish you would try it the first chance you get, and if you don't say it's no time for counting, "you can say I'm no judge."

I was taught a good lesson by that circumstance. I was made more particular; I was less rash; I looked into things more carefully before expressing myself. I do not remember ever speaking disrespectfully of my father but that one time. I would not have done it then had I not been so severely tempted. My sister did wrong. Now, my dear children, avoid provoking one another to wrath; remember you may do a thing in a minute that will take you all your life long to undo. Your sins may be forgiven, but the remembrance of them will ever be grievous to you; so beware!

"Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness."

LETTER XXIV.

One more time—Home the best place to find out what one is
—“O I’ll stop after awhile”—Habits—Cherry and Chibby—
Spilled milk—Adieu for a season.

DEAR CHILDREN:—I thought last week I would stop writing, at least for a season; but I saw the editor of the paper, and as the weather is warm, and things generally sluggish, he thought I had better not stop. Hence I will appear one more time at least.

My wife has been after me for some weeks to write a chapter on cows. She thinks my experience justifies the attempt. You would be surprised to see how proud she is because my letters have been so much noticed. She has really gotten to believe that I am smart. You know I have a way of “throwing sand in her eyes.” Even the children at home say, “Papa, don’t stop.” “Why?” says I. “’Cause, we want people to think you’s a great man.” I tell you, children, it is a good sign for one to stand well at home. It is the best place in the world to find out what anybody is. There the true character is fully seen. If I could get you to tell me, I would rather ask you what kind of a man your father is, or what kind of a woman your

mother is, or whether your brothers and sisters are good or not, than to ask the teacher, preacher, or anybody else, for the reason that most people put on their good behavior when company is about, or when they are away from home. I have heard it called "putting the best foot foremost." But at home they throw off all restraints. Then there is a chance to see whether there be any thing lovely about them. I have thought often I would drop you a hint or two upon this subject. Do your best to cultivate good manners, kindness, patience, affability, and love at home. If you do you will have no trouble when you go abroad; it will all come easy to you, it will be so natural. You will make no miserable blunders, such as I have often seen folks make in trying to appear what they were not. I have been disgusted many a time, and then had my disgust changed into pity, when I have seen some of the class to which I have alluded at hotels, on steam-boats, and elsewhere in my travels. They put me in mind of the time when I was a poor swimmer, trying to swim up stream. I used to flounder, and kick, and puff, and make more noise than three good swimmers, and then didn't make any headway. I was undertaking too much, you see, and consequently exposed my want of training. In life's river, upon which your bark and mine have been launched, we have a great deal to do with forming and controlling the current. So, if we let loose all our passions, and give them full sweep for a few years in the early part of life, it will be next to impossible to check them. They will have gathered

strength as they have rolled on—this little tributary and that adding each one a little. I say, if you allow that sort of thing you will soon be at the “mercy of the waves,” and sad indeed will be your condition.

I have seen young men—some of them started out with me—it was so easy and so pleasant to float with the tide, that they did so. I have talked with them about the danger they were in. They would partially admit it, but would say, “O I’ll stop after awhile, and go your way.” After awhile some of the poor fellows did try to turn, but they found they were not as strong as they thought they were, and in their alarm and inability many have foundered; and to-day life’s river is strewn all along with the wrecks of those who have acted similarly. Hence I say, boys, and girls too, watch the current of your life; don’t let any habit get hold of you. You hold your habits, and then when any evil is suggested, you can say, *No*, in such a way as that no second appeal will be made from that quarter.

“But,” say you, “what has all that got to do with the cow chapter?” Nothing at all, but then there are some pretty good hints, and you know it has been said, “A hint to the wise is sufficient.”

About twenty years ago my father bought the farm adjoining our old homestead, built a brick house, and we moved. There was an old barn and some pasture at the old place, so the cows were left there to winter. Our milkmaid, who was also cook, was very valuable to us, and withal not very healthy; so when snow-storms and rain came, somebody else

had to do the milking, and as I was about the best except Sarah, it generally fell to my lot. Then, mother was so kind! She called me her man, buttoned up my coat for me, tied my comfort around my neck, and promised to make me a pie, or some cakes. She did not do these things to pay me, but simply to encourage me. She knew that any order would have been sufficient, but the truth of the matter is she had a kind heart, and you know that when one has good inside, it is very apt to manifest itself in some way. How those little kindnesses did strengthen me! I didn't care for the cold, snow, or rain. I went off singing.

One morning it rained just enough to make a little icy crust upon the already-frozen ground. A very heavy snow-storm followed, and covered over every thing beautifully. A little before night I got ready and started to the old place to milk Cherry and Chibby, the only cows, I think, that were then giving milk.

Sometimes I would be milking away and singing, when all at once my old cloak-flap, or something else, would dangle about the legs of the cow. She would raise her foot as if to knock off a fly, I would be off my guard, and in "less than no time" I would be *minus* milk, can, and hat, and perhaps off a little distance getting up. But this time no such difficulty arose. I got through with the cows all right—fed them, fastened the doors, and started home feeling happy. I got along finely until within a few hundred yards of home, where was quite a hill. I began the ascent thoughtless of what lay covered

beneath my feet. I was nearly up—I made another step, it was the fatal one. I was on a slippery place and didn't know it—down I came “curflump,” milk and all. The snow drank up the milk at once, and hardly left a sign. I gathered up myself and the bucket, looked a little while at the rugged place my figure had made, and started to the house feeling much chagrined. I was afraid of a scolding, etc. Hence I was unhappy. I went in, told how it was—mother said she knew I did the best I could, and that it was all right. I felt better, and the thing was over. I never see that picture in Webster's Spelling-book, representing the maid who let the pail fall from her head, that I do not feel sorry for the poor creature.

Now, children, remember a great many things in this world are covered over with beautiful trimmings that are very dangerous to meddle with. In other words, they are like that hill, covered first with ice, then snow, and whoever carelessly treads will lose footing, and perhaps sustain serious loss. Look into things, their probable and possible consequences, before you allow yourself to take hold. Remember the old adage, “Look before you leap.” Think before you speak, and then the way to a long, wide, and useful career will be opened to you.

Now, suppose I have made one good impression on each of those who have read my letters, how many do you think that would amount to? Well, I reckon about forty thousand. That is a great deal to do, isn't it? Now, if each of the forty thousand will go to work to make one more impression

upon somebody else, who can calculate the good that might result therefrom?

With this letter I will bid you adieu for a season. When times and things are a little more favorable than now, I may begin a new series. Until then, remember that you have a friend who will ever be glad to hear from you, and who will always take a lively interest in the welfare of the young people. I want all my little readers who are not already Christians to become such at an early day. Begin in the morning if you would do a day's work. Don't forget that you will not be able to put in the plea of the eleventh-hour servants, told of in the New Testament. They had not been called before. You have. May the Lord bless, prosper, and keep you all unto everlasting life!

"Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right."

LETTER XXV.

Still alive—Christmas-tree—Old Santa Claus—Finding his pile, etc.

DEAR CHILDREN:—"I seat myself with pen in hand to inform you that we are all well, and hope these few lines will find you enjoying the same great blessing." I wonder if there ever was a boy or girl that did not begin a first letter something like the above? I reckon not.

It has been a long time since I wrote my last letter to you—a considerable gap it is—much joy and sorrow, sickness and death, have intervened. When I think of what has passed, particularly in Memphis, I am forcibly reminded of that hymn that is sung at the opening of almost every Annual Conference. It begins—

And are we yet alive?

I propose to throw a bridge over that deep, wide, and dark chasm,* and write as though nothing had happened. (Look after that word, chasm.)

*The yellow fever made its appearance about the first of September, 1873. The first official report of deaths was published Sept. 14—the last, Nov. 9. For over two months death-scenes were common. It is estimated that over two thousand persons died.

Last night was Christmas eve here, and I suppose it was the same where you live. The officers of the Sunday-school where I belong had a Christmas-tree for the children. The church was decorated with evergreens and flowers, wreath-shaped, looped, and festooned. The tree-top touched the ceiling, and was loaded, limb after limb, with gifts for the children. There was a name on each thing, and every child's name belonging to the school was on something—not one was omitted. Under the tree were piled up, in the shape of a pyramid, apples and oranges, with little packages of candies and nuts for each one. From the ceiling, just in the rear of all, waved a beautiful banner, with a white satin ground on one side, inscribed with letters of gold. The other side was a red ground, with letters of silver. The inscriptions together read thus: "Hernando Street Sunday-school working for Jesus." That was grand, wasn't it? Taken altogether, every thing was appropriate and in good taste—both of which are features to be carefully observed all through life. Yes, my dear children, to do right things, to speak proper words at the right time and in the right way, are accomplishments as beautiful as they are rare. I remember reading somewhere a very wise man's remark in regard to a word fitly spoken. He said that it "is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." Seeing the silver side of that banner, with its "great big" letters of gold, made me think of that passage. It helped me also to appreciate more fully the beauty and force of the expression. Now, I want every one of you to look

for that passage, and write me where it can be found, and who its author is. A big job for *some* who are bigger than you—take my word for it.

When the church was about full of men, women, and children of all sizes and ages, the kind brother and superintendent, J. R. Godwin, rose, and after the style of public speakers, said: "I am no orator. If I was I am satisfied that this would not be the time or the place to make a speech." (He was correct, wasn't he?) "I am convinced that what is to take place will interest you all more than any thing I could say." Correct again, say you, and I too. "Now," said he, "all of you who would like to see 'Santa Claus,' say I." "I" was heard all over the house. Before the sound had fairly died away the shutters of one of the large windows flew back, and among the crowd the old gentleman jumped, sure enough. Imagine the effect, if you can. Some hallooed, boohooed right out, some cried, some sat still as they could, and said *they* "wasn't afeard;" but I could see them shake, and by the way they said it, I think their tongues were acting upon their own responsibility principally. The old fellow soon convinced them, however, that he was not to be feared. He wished them all a merry Christmas, bowed and scraped, shook hands, and then began to haul down and hand out the presents. That soon relieved all embarrassment, and notwithstanding his hideous visage, there wasn't a child, I think, that refused to leave father and mother at his call. So much, children, for kindness—it has a wonderful power—it wins every time. Remember that, and in all your

intercourse with one another be kind and gentle—live in peaceful harmony. What a beautiful sight it is to behold a large family of children where each strives to please the other, and above all, anxious and ever ready to yield willing help and obedience to father and mother (the two sweetest names, and the two dearest persons, on earth) !

About ten o'clock "Old Santa" had literally "limbed" the tree—scattered his bounty in every direction. He then took leave of all, told the children that it would be a long time before he would come again, and that they must all be good while he was gone. Whereupon the assembly broke up, and many a little fellow tugged and grunted in carrying home what he had gotten, and was assisted in the effort by the reflection that the morning would bring fresher joys.

When the little ones began to come in at our house, you never heard the like. One was blowing a horn, another a harp, another was rolling a wagon, another rattling "queensware," and the other—well, I don't know what. As soon as I heard the little accounts of the affair, preparation for bed was in order. Soon all of them were cozily tucked away and fast asleep. "Santa" and I then had a talk. What he had brought each one, and what it cost, all came in review before us. We arranged the whole business, and let me tell you, it took every corner of the room, and part of the vacancy under the bed, to complete the arrangement. All was done by twelve o'clock. The lights were turned out, "Santa" retired, I went to bed, and silence and

darkness reigned. Long before day—before I was awake—there was a jubilee. Each had found his “pile,” and I can assure you the movements, in all pure white, were as graceful as childhood only can make them. What a time! I have seen nothing like it since I was a boy—away back yonder in Maryland. I felt happy to see them happy. O that life may go well with them and all other dear children!

Children are compared in one of the Psalms to arrows in the hand of a mighty man. It is also said, “Blessed is the man who has his quiver full of them.” Here I think the editor of the *Western Methodist* and “Uncle Bob” come in. Now, children, what do you think? That new baby of “Uncle Bob’s” didn’t get a thing. Aint it too bad? What caps the climax is, I went up town and found that “Old Santa” had bought every thing from one and another, and had them all charged to me!

“O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our maker.”

LETTER XXVI.

P's and Q's—New Year—Popping crackers—Little drops of water—My little Conference acquaintances—That ghost.

DEAR CHILDREN:—"They" used to tell me when I was a boy that a great deal depended upon how one began the week or the year. I was led to think it went a "good ways" in determining what kind of a time I might expect during each of those periods. For instance, *we* children used to be very careful—on our P's and Q's—trying to avoid being whipped on Monday or New Year's, as we verily believed it a sure sign of another whipping every day during that week or year. I wonder if you have n't heard something like it before!

As I have not yet lost all my childish impressions, I thought I would be careful how I began 1874. Hence this letter is being written New Year's day. The weather is quite gloomy; a drizzling rain is falling, which greatly interferes with fire-works. Not many boys are popping crackers. They will have their "dimes" for something else. Perhaps some of them will do like that dear little Edgar Blakely, now dead, whose mother's letter to the Bible Agent, Brother Caldwell, appeared in last

week's *Western Methodist*. Did you all read that letter? The sum he sent was not large in the eyes of man, but it was in the eyes of the Master, no doubt. Reading the letter made me think of an account I read, not long since, in the New Testament. It seems that Jesus was sitting over against the treasury, looking at the persons who came up to cast in their gifts. Some, it is said, cast in of their abundance, and it may be that many made donations which, if given in these days, would be published far and wide, and the donors be called saints. There was a poor woman (the record says she was a widow) came up, and in a humble manner threw in two mites (find out how much that was). No doubt she felt sorry that her circumstances would not permit her to do more, and may be she thought it didn't amount to scarcely any thing. If she did, she was mistaken; for Jesus said she had given more than all of them. She had deprived herself; yet the Saviour did not rebuke her, or intimate that she ought not to give it. I think this teaches that offerings to God that do not involve some deprivation amount to very little. Nobody should fail to help the Bible or missionary cause because he or she has n't much. Remember, the biggest things in this world were accomplished little by little. Let's see—how does that verse begin which you all have heard? Ah! I have it:

Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean
And the pleasant land.

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Little deeds of kindness,
Little words of love,
Make our world an Eden,
Like the heaven above.

There are so many other things I want to tell you, that I do not know where to begin. In November, I made a trip to Camden, Ark. The Little Rock Conference was held there; and as I was anxious to see the brethren, etc., I thought I would go. Traveling about, one often has a good time. You have a chance to see things that you aint used to. Then, you hear a great deal that you have n't heard before. You get into little scrapes and have everybody laughing at you, like Brother Hunter did that night he got into the water. You would have laughed, too, had you been along. He very dryly remarked that he could not see where the laugh came in; that did not surprise me at all, for I never knew one in his fix that could. Then there are some folks that can see more than others, any way—that is, they think they can. I have known boys who declared that in coming up the road they had seen a ghost. They could tell its shape, color, and movements—all about it. Upon investigation it was found to be a stump, a goose, a turkey, or a hog, but never a ghost. No, my dear children, there are no such things as ghosts in this world. If there were, you could not see them with the eyes you now have. The departed are now spiritual beings. You are yet in the flesh, consequently you cannot perceive spirit. Do n't any of you believe a word of the old stories that some of your nurses

and others tell you about these things, for there is no truth in them.

I was very busy at Conference, hence I did not go about much; yet I made the acquaintance of several of my little readers. Some waited at the Conference-room for hours to speak to me. Let's see—there were Eddie McCorkle, Willie Whitthong, Eva Whitthong, Andrew Whitthong, and Gus Buchanan, all in one day. I was glad to take them by the hand, and felt highly gratified to know that my letters had awakened such an interest in them.

Some people write and speak to please the grown folks; they skip the children. You, boys, know what that word skip means; because, when you turned that leaf of your book over before you had gotten the lesson on the other side, you know you had skipped, and you know you ought not to have done it, too—do n't you? For my part, I will try to please the children, for the reason that they are to be the grown folks, and if the proper turn can be given them before that time arrives, there will be no danger of total failure during life.

Then I went out to Brother Parker's, to see his little ones. I think there were six of them—four fine boys and two girls. One of the boys is named McTyeire. I wonder if he won't be a preacher, and then a bishop some day! If I was one of the official members on the Camden District, I would allow Brother Parker a liberal salary, and would n't rest until the last dollar was paid. He needs and deserves more than he gets. If you see any of the

brethren that ought to attend to that matter, you can tell them what I say.

Now, children, I want all of you that can read to begin with me, as soon as you get this letter, the Testament and Psalms. Let's read them carefully all through. As soon as I shall have done, I will notify you. I wonder who will be the first to accomplish the profitable work? We shall see.

It will give me great pleasure to receive letters from any of you, at any time. Don't refuse to write because you can't make pretty letters, or have not the proper use of language. These things come only by practice; hence you must TRY.

"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

LETTER XXVII.

The judgment—Holding out faithful—Exercise—The blacksmith's arm—My German teacher—Slang, etc.

DEAR CHILDREN :—I have written, from time to time, about one thing and another, and in every letter I have endeavored to say something instructive as well as interesting.

I have talked to you through the paper as I should have done had each of you been with me around the fireside. I have called your attention to many things that I regard as very important in the formation of character.

I have warned one and all against some things which are very evil in their tendency, and which are common in high as well as low life.

When I sit and think about you and my own dear little ones, as I often do, after you and they are locked fast in sleep, and when your little minds are flitting here and there, sometimes in pleasant and then in ugly dreams, I feel a terrible responsibility.

I fear lest I shall have to answer for a great deal that will be done after I'm dead. Did you ever think of that? Yes, it will take until the judgment for our actions to work their results. Did you

know that that is one of the reasons why the judgment is not to be until the last human being shall have died, or undergone a change? You know the sum must be worked out before an answer can be reported.

God has made one grand provision for all who repent and turn unto him. Nothing counts against us after repentance, provided we hold out faithful unto the end.

But if our lives are made up of meanness, and our example and influence have been evil, and we die without repentance, great will be the weight of our iniquity, when the searching sound of the last trump shall wake the dead, and we all rise to judgment—that day when shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory.” Well will it be with you and I, if we do not say, with Cain of old, “My iniquity is too great to be borne.”

You may think, perhaps, that I am writing a little in advance of your comprehension; but you must remember that one of the principal objects I have in writing is to train your minds—you must learn to think. If there is nothing in my letters but what you already know, there will be very little benefit derived from them.

It is exercise that develops the muscles of the body. Did you ever look at the right arm of a good blacksmith? If so, did n't you observe how big and strong it looked? And when he “doubled” up his fist, did n't you see the great, cord-like muscles rise clear up to his elbow? That arm was

developed by throwing the sledge. If you want your minds to grow strong, if you want every department of your brains to be in lively exercise, if you want grasp of thought, if you want brilliancy of intellect, if you want clearness of perception, if you want beauty of expression, you must exercise all the faculties with which God has blessed you. In order to insure success, you will have to begin while you are young, and continue that exercise. I can tell you, children, there is nothing like employment for mind as well as body. Indeed, the mind will work, whether you will or not; and if you do not furnish that which is profitable, rest assured some enemy will sow tares. I don't want any thing but good seed sown in your minds. Hence you must be always at something profitable. You have no time to lose. It will keep you busy to do your part in the world.

My German teacher came last Saturday night to give me a lesson. He brought me a great long written conversation about volcanoes. He handed me the paper, and asked me to read. I took hold, and O me! what an array of great words there was! I began, and stumbled through after a fashion. I made some mistakes; I didn't pronounce every word exactly right; but I learned something, nevertheless. I then expressed surprise that he should have brought me so hard a lesson. "Why," said he, "I did it on purpose. I want you to master words." I caught his idea, and said no more. He closed the lesson at this juncture. I can tell you, boys, I was glad—almost as glad as you are, some-

times, when the preacher announces his last "head," and closes the book.

There is one thing that I have had in my mind for some time to say to you all, especially to the girls. It is in regard to what we call slang. I hear it frequently among the young ladies who are about grown; and I assure you it always makes me feel bad. If anybody is to talk "slang," let it be somebody else. I would suggest, however, that there is an elegant English that is far better. It does n't sound very well to hear a young lady, when asked if she will go with you, answer, "Not much;" or to do something, "Can't see it;" or after being introduced to a young man, "I intend to go for him;" or when mother or sister asks her to assist in some household duty, "Not for Joe." I was fellow-clerk some years ago with a young man whom I will call Sam. He left, and I lost sight of him. Passing up Main street, a year or so afterward, who should I meet but Sam. I was glad to see him. I took him by the hand, and said, "Well, Sam, how do you do?" He grinned, and, in the most careless way imaginable, said, "O I'm all settin!" Now, I hear all these things often; and sometimes, I am sorry to say, very intellectual and well-bred young ladies fall into the habit. Some think it is smart; and often it is indulged with a pertness more saucy than becoming. "I bet," or "You bet," and other like phrases, sound little and ridiculous enough among men who make no pretensions to refinement. But it is entirely out of taste for such expressions to issue from the lips of a young lady.

I trust, therefore, that my readers will think twice before they speak once, and avoid all such expressions. If you want your words to have weight, if you want them highly appreciated, choose them well. Above all, let them be pure.

Since my last, I have received letters from Sallie Kerr, Maggie and Jane, Estell Jagers, "Blanche," Cora Bell, "Fannie," Eugene Moss, Clara Kendrick, Annie, Willie Kelton, A. N. Powell, Jimmie, and Walter E. Williams. Walter thinks I have forgotten him, but he mistakes; I have thought of him often since that night I took supper with him. I highly prize every one of those letters.

"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him."

LETTER XXVIII.

About midnight—The sleet—In the morning—Trees bent down—A beautiful sight—Theophilus.

DEAR CHILDREN:—The weather this winter, so far, except for a few days, has been quite mild. About two weeks ago, just as the evening, or, as you all say in the country, night began, somebody said that it was raining. About midnight I was up, and every now and then I heard a sizzling noise in the fire-place. I went to the window and listened. I could hear the particles fall—the sound was about like shot on straw. I knew at once that it was what we all call sleeting. I felt very comfortable to know that I was safely housed, and by a big fire. Somehow I feel better and more grateful on such occasions for the comforts I have than at any other time. You know I am more forcibly reminded then.

In the morning the little particles had ceased to fall, but they had done their work. Every thing was covered with a coat of ice. Some trees, which the evening before stood erect, were broken—destroyed; others were bent beneath their load, and in some cases their very tops touched the ground. The clouds obstructed the rays of the rising sun, but the light we had reflected the sparkle of the

heavenly jewelry. The green and crystal were in beautiful contrast. I walked up town, and as I walked I reflected. I thought that those trees, some broken off at the trunk, others with sad havoc of limbs, and others bowed so low, were a fit representation of mankind under sin. Since Adam's fall the storm has prevailed. Many a noble form, once erect, now lies among the wrecks of the past, or bows low under the weight of accumulated sins.

The weather moderated toward noon. The sun shone out, the ice began to melt, and before night a great many trees were lifting up their heads again. Next day they stood erect once more. I then had another thought. I thought that was a fit representation of all who had come under the influence of the Sun of righteousness. Many a time has it been the case that people have lived from childhood to age, sinning a little every day, and never repenting until they were almost lost, and when, perhaps, every one thought they were lost, and came near saying so; and then, happily for them, through the instrumentality of some servant of God, the Divine Spirit has wrought with their souls, and turned them from darkness to light; or, in other words, they have been made to see and feel their sinful condition, and been converted. After conversion they begin, like the bended tree, to straighten, and, after living some time under the influences of the new life, they stand perfectly erect—reinstated.

I have received many letters since last week—one from Mollie T. Burkhead, Clarksville, Ark. She wants me to tell her who Theophilus was. Well, I

will endeavor to give her all the light upon that subject I can. In the first place, he was the person to whom St. Luke inscribes his Gospel and The Acts of the Apostles. His name is derived from two Greek words, "Theos" and "Philos," which, being interpreted, may be read, "Friend of God." Some of the fathers, I am informed, doubted the personality of Theophilus. They regarded the name as applicable to every Christian reader.

Josephus, however, in his Antiquities, says: "The Roman Prefect Vitellius came to Jerusalem to the Passover in the year A.D. 37, and deposed Caiaphas and appointed Jonathan in his place. In the same year, at the feast of Pentecost, he came to Jerusalem and deprived Jonathan of the high-priesthood, which he gave to Theophilus." He says farther: "Theophilus was removed by Herod Agrippa the First, after the accession of that prince to the government of Judea in the year A.D. 41. So that he must have continued in office about five years."

The Rev. Wm. Basil Jones says: "That Theophilus is not mentioned by name in the New Testament, but that it is most probable that he was the high-priest who granted a commission to Saul to proceed to Damascus and to take charge of any believers whom he might find there."

So much on account of "Theophilus." Excuse me for writing in this way, but if you ask such questions I will not know how to avoid it.

"Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid."

LETTER XXIX.

Reading Rollin's History—Cyrus the Great—Making her *début*
—The sovereign of the world—Alexander's sisters make
their brother's clothes—Reading yellow-backs.

DEAR CHILDREN:—I was reading Rollin's Ancient History the other day, and I came to a passage that impressed me very forcibly. It treated of a subject of great importance, and as you all are interested, and as I wish to speak plainly to you in regard to the matter alluded to, I will tell you what Mr. Rollin says. He was on the subject of the reverence and respect that children had for their parents in ancient times.

The Persians, for example, were a vain and haughty people, yet the reverence which they showed their parents was a matter of remark among the writers of history.

Rollin says that Cyrus the Great, in the midst of his conquests, and at the most exalted pitch to which fortune had raised him, would not accept of the advantageous offer made him by Cyaxares, his uncle, viz., of giving him his daughter in marriage, and Media for her dowry, till he had first advised with his father and mother, and obtained their consent.

He says that among the Persians a son never dared to seat himself before his mother till he had

first obtained her leave. To do otherwise was considered a crime.

Alas! how different is the style in these days! It has been turned "end for end," so to say. The little children, and some not so little, assume all the airs of superiority, and in some respects ignore parental authority altogether.

I have seen in my travels children who treated their parents with less respect than any good parent would treat his child. I have heard them dictate to their mother. I have heard them speak as if they were ashamed of her. I have heard them tell her they wouldn't and they would. I have heard them contradict her. I have heard them cry, and seen them pout, because they couldn't wear their best clothes every day. I have heard them say they wished they were somebody else's children, so they could do as they please. I have heard of young ladies who not only did not ask the consent of their parents to marry, but who married directly against their will, and married sots at that. No child ought to do that way. I feel sorrow, mingled with contempt, for all such. I feel sorry, for I know they will sup sorrow before long. Yes, a disobedient, disrespectful, and ungrateful child will have a "hard row to weed," as well as gather a very unsatisfactory crop. A passage of scripture occurs to me just here that is applicable. Listen, and after you have heard it, look for it and get it by heart :

The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out and the young eagles shall eat it.

I know some of you will say that you must "sow your wild oats." Sowing the wild oats would not be so bad if it wasn't for having to gather them. Did you ever think of that? People always reap what they sow; wild oats produce wild oats—nothing else.

Who can tell me where the passage in the Bible is that says: "Be not deceived: God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." I will tell you this much: it is in one of Paul's letters, but which? You find that out, if you can.

I fear there is a growing disposition among the young ladies of our time to ignore the fact that they were made for nobler ends than many of them are pursuing. How few girls, grown, know how to make a biscuit, or cook a ham, or stir up and bake a hoe-cake, or make a shirt, or a dress! How few that really know how to dress themselves, after every thing has been made to order! They think they know, and will pile it on and on, until they scare almost all the young men out of the notion of ever getting married. They overdo, and hence undo. It is the "style," I believe, for the young lady who has made her *début* (look after that word, *début*), to dress fine, sit in the parlor, drum the piano, and receive calls during the day, while her mother is in another part of the house singing, perhaps, the "song of the shirt." At night she is off at a ball, or at the theater, until the small hours of the morning. She then hurries to bed, without even saying her prayers, there to lie until toward noon next day. She rises and spends the rest of the day, per-

haps, in reading some love-sick tale in a yellow-back book that cost twenty-five cents, and then tries to make herself and others believe she is happy, and filling her place with dignity and propriety. What a sad mistake she makes! How differently thought the ancients—those of noble blood in Homer's time! Ladies of rank in that day drew water for themselves, from springs, and washed with their own hands the linen of their respective families. Alexander's sisters, the daughters of a powerful prince, made their brother's clothes. The celebrated Lucretia used to spin in the midst of her attendants.

Augustus, who was sovereign of the world, wore, for several years together, no other clothes but what his wife and sister made him. It used to be customary for the princesses who sat upon the throne to prepare several dishes at every meal. "In a word," says Mr. Rollin, "needle-work, the care of domestic affairs, a serious and retired life, is the proper function of woman; and for this they were designed by Providence. The depravity of the age has indeed affixed to these customs, which are very near as old as the creation, an idea of meanness and contempt; but what has it substituted for the vigorous exercise which a just education enabled the sex to undertake? A soft indolence, a stupid idleness, frivolous conversations, vain amusements, a strong passion for public show, and a frantic love of gaming." Now, compare the two, and say yourself which can boast of being founded on good, sound, solid judgment, and a love of truth and nature.

Two little girls, Mary and Susie, living at Oil

Trough, Ark., want to know how long darkness prevailed upon the face of the deep, or abyss, at the creation. My answer is, Until God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." Another letter came from a dear child who wants me to give her love to all the orphans. She says she is an orphan, and knows how to sympathize with them. I want that dear little one, as well as the rest of you, to turn to the 68th Psalm, and read the 5th verse. I want you all to write to me—it will help you.

"For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

LETTER XXX.

Traveling around—Keeping your eyes open—Ask your mother to help you—That “barefooted cart”—Mr. Shackelford—The raid on the egg-box.

DEAR CHILDREN:—You will remember, a few weeks ago I told you that in traveling around we had a chance to hear things that we had n't heard before. Some things we hear sound very strange, and put us to wondering what they mean.

When I am away from home, I keep both eyes and ears open; by that means I both see and hear a great deal. By the way, do any of you know why it is that we all have two eyes, and two ears, and two hands, and only one mouth and one tongue? I will wait just one week, and see if any of you can give me a satisfactory answer. If you don't “hit the nail square on the head,” I'll do it myself just one week after.

You would laugh if you could be at my house some day, when I arrive from Mississippi or Arkansas. Pronounce that last word this way—Arkan-saw. Bishop McTyeire pronounces it that way, and I can tell you I have come to believe that he is

generally about right in most things. I would like for all my readers to learn to do things as he does them.

If I do n't mind, I will get clear off the subject—won't I? Well, I was going to tell you that when I get home I have all the children and "Aunt Bob" just as close around me as I can get them. After I find out how they all are, and how they all have been while I was gone, and asked if all have been good, and if they have said their prayers night and morning, and if the children have been to school every day, and if they have had perfect lessons, and if they went to Sunday-school every Sunday, I am ready, first, to hear all they have to tell me. Frequently that is a big job; but by having two or three of them, and sometimes all, talking at once, a conclusion is reached. Then my turn comes.

You know, I said that I kept my eyes and ears open—just the way you must do when you go away from home, especially if you are where there is a chance to learn any thing good.

I do not suppose any of my readers would go purposely anywhere else; but in case any of you should accidentally go into bad company, allow me to make a single suggestion. It is this: get out as soon as you possibly can; because the Bible says, "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Which of you wants your good manners corrupted? I will answer that question myself: Not one.

No, my dear children; you cannot afford it. Remember, a good name, a clear record, is better and more to be desired than thousands of gold and

silver; and just think, these very valuable things are within reach of every one of you.

Be jealous of your good name; act always so that you will be above suspicion; don't go anywhere, don't do or say any thing, that you would be ashamed to have known.

If any thing presents itself, and there is any doubt about the propriety of it, always give yourselves the benefit of the doubt; you'll not regret it, in the end.

It may be that, at the time, to do so will seem unprofitable; but if you will observe those who go ahead without regard to consequences, you will find that the course I suggest is best by far.

I give you these few thoughts to turn over in your minds; study them well. Ask your mother to help you; ask your father to turn them round, so you can comprehend them altogether.

I was going on to say that, after all get quiet, I begin to tell what I have seen and heard during my absence that I think will interest the children.

I remember, when I returned from the Little Rock Conference, last December, I told them of a certain kind of cart I had heard of, and had them all guessing what it could mean. They never came anywhere near it. Finally, I told them. Now, you guess awhile, and, if you "can't come it," let me know, and I'll tell you, too.

I was talking with a gentleman about the Arkansas people moving so much. I told him that that was the reason, in my opinion, so many of them got along so poorly. You have heard this

before, have n't you—"A rolling stone gathers no moss"? He agreed with me, and then told me of a man that he knew who had been in the State twenty-eight years, and had moved twenty-nine times. When he started from Mississippi he had only fifty cents in *cash*, and hauled all his other effects in a "BAREFOOTED CART." That was a queer kind of expression to me, and I thought it was a wonderful cart, too.

That is almost equal to the answer an old colored man down in Mississippi gave to Brother Page some time ago, when he asked him where he lived. He said, "I live on Chicken-thief Road, Hickahaley Creek, on Mr. Shackelford's place, sorter between Buck-snort and Wink-out." The way to find out things is to ask those who know. Never be ashamed to acknowledge that you do n't know, when you do n't. You will learn faster by so doing.

Before I close, I must answer a couple of questions asked by three little ones that are reading the Testament and Psalms with me. I cannot afford to neglect any who take my advice—no, not I. Now for the answers. First: Mark says the poor widow threw in two mites, which make a farthing. A farthing is one half-cent in our money. Second: The rock which Moses smote, and from which water gushed out, was in Horeb—which means dry—situated somewhere in the desert through which the children of Israel journeyed on their way to Canaan. Moses named the place Massah, signifying temptation, and Meribah, strife. Mr. Shaw, in his "Travels," says: "Here (in the plain of Rephidim)

stands the rock of Meribah, uninjured by time or accident. It is a granite block of about six yards square, and totters, as it were, in the middle of the valley. It seems to have formerly belonged to Mount Sinai, which hangs in a variety of precipices all over this plain." He says the channel that the water made is about two inches deep and twenty wide, and that it has the appearance of the inside of a tea-kettle that has been long in use.

On the editorial page of last week's paper there is a letter from Fairview, Ark. I hope you read that letter. It shows how easy the subscription-price for a whole year can be raised. It seems that the four girls mentioned had been saving eggs to buy a new dress apiece; but rather than do without the *Western Methodist*, they "made a raid" upon the box that held them, and only took out eight dozen, which were enough to secure all the money needed. Just think of it! fifty-two copies of the *Western Methodist* for eight dozen eggs! I will venture to say that if you will add up the columns of reading-matter that will appear in the next fifty-two numbers, it will be more than you could buy in books for ten dollars—just five times as much as the paper costs. Now, if the subscription-money is any object at your house, I want to make a suggestion. It is this: get your mother to give you an old Dominique (Dominicker) hen. Who can tell me which is the correct way of spelling this word? You call her "METHODIST," and treat her well; and if she don't lay eggs enough to renew your subscription before the time expires, you may—well, you may

charge the balance to me. I am satisfied, if my little readers knew how much it costs to publish the paper, they would all try to help us.

“Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.”

LETTER XXXI.

Different kinds of scrapes—Less than fifty years—Learning to chew tobacco—Got sick—Banquo's ghost—Casting out the burden of my complaint—Cherry pone—The French.

DEAR CHILDREN:—I expect that the most of you have learned before this that there are many different kinds of scrapes into which folks get. I have told you of several that I've been in myself, but you need n't think that I've told you all. I have been a little like the darkey was who went to his master and said, "Massa, one of them steers is dead, and t'other one too. I didn't like to tell you of both at once, cause I was afeerd you could n't stood it."

Something less than fifty years ago I was going to primary school No. 26, Howard county, Md. It was a regular old-fashioned country-school, and the only one I ever attended. College sounded away off to me. Educational facilities were not as numerous as now. The boys and girls of to-day have a much better chance of becoming well educated than those of my day. I wonder if they are taking advantage of it. I remember all the teachers I ever had. There were a great many folks to please

in the neighborhood, consequently we had a new teacher every now and then.

Strange to say, every time we had a change of teachers we had a change of books too; that was strange to me then, but as it has been the way ever since, only a little more so, I have ceased to wonder; for now the books are changed several times under the same teacher, and that, too, before the former ones have been half completed.

The little time I've been sending my children, and there are not more than a half dozen of them, I reckon the books that have gone out of use—been “laid on the shelf”—in my house, would be enough to begin a small school. It is time that our Southern country had standard books that could be “tied to.” I never saw any sense in so much change. It has a tendency, as little as may be thought of it, to make the children fickle. But I am getting off the track—I started out to tell you of another one of those scrapes.

I am not sure but it was about the biggest I ever got into. You know almost every boy thinks it looks mannish to smoke cigars and chew tobacco. I remember that is what I used to think myself. But now, as I look back, I can see how wrong I was. I have even heard that there are some young ladies that use snuff—use it on the sly. I wonder if that is so. If it is, I want to say to those who do, that they can't keep it secret long. Their very complexion will reveal it—nervous debility, dyspepsia, arrest of mental development, all will, like so many tongues, speak out.

I knew several young men at school whom I thought models. I thought they were accomplished, not because of their learning, but because they could whip all the other boys, and could smoke and chew without getting sick.

I was so exercised upon the points to which I've alluded, that I concluded to "ape" them. (Look after that word, ape.) I tried my hand several times at fighting. I don't remember that the result was ever attended with any degree of satisfaction to me. Some people think they were intended for certain things, and sometimes they are woefully mistaken. I am satisfied that I was never intended for a fighter, and yet I think I was as much so intended as any boy is. The main point is to avoid difficulties—not to get into them. If half the pains were taken to keep out of trouble that is taken to get in, and to get out after getting in, there would be but little in the world.

The next thing was to learn how to chew tobacco. Alfred Scaggs used to have some as black as your hat, and very sweet. I believe he called it the "honey-dew." At recess I would beg a piece of him, put it in my mouth along with a small scrap of liquorice—we used to pronounce it "lickrish"—or a little calamus; chew a few minutes, and then turn it out. I came very near keeping it in too long several times.

I continued the mixture for some time. One day, in the afternoon, I concluded that I would take a chew of tobacco by itself. I chewed and spit at a great rate. I started home with some in my mouth,

and a piece in my pocket. Just before I reached the house I cleared my mouth, and behind the house, in some familiar crack, I laid carefully away what was in my pocket. I did all this, you know, to keep father and mother from catching me. I hadn't been in the house long before I didn't feel so well. I moved around considerably.

Supper was being prepared, and I think there was a great lightened cherry pone on hand. By the way, that is about as good a thing as you ever ate, too. I was wonderfully fond of it, and so sorry that I didn't have any appetite; no, not a bit. Dear me, how sick I was! It is no use for me or anybody else to undertake to describe the feeling—it can't be done. It has to be experienced in order to be appreciated; and no one but a perfect fool would be willing to undergo the thing just to learn how it feels. By the time supper was announced I was as pale as Banquo's ghost, and with as little speculation in my eyes. I took my seat, but it was more uncomfortable than it had ever been before. It seemed to me that "father's grace" was longer than ever, yet he was always brief—he was a man of few words. My dear step-mother was greatly concerned. She remarked that her dear boy was sick. I said, Yes'm, and left the table with the great sweat-drops just boiling out of my forehead. I rushed out of doors and cast out the burden of my complaint hurriedly. I then staggered back into the house about as "limber as a rag." I was kindly undressed and put to bed, where I was glad to get. I was ashamed of myself. I knew I had done

wrong. I had gone against my father's wishes. I had deceived my mother. I had injured myself. I was a naughty boy. I couldn't feel otherwise than shabby. After awhile I got to sleep.

In the morning I was better, but not well. I didn't get over it for some days. But I tell you what I did do: I gave up tobacco-chewing. I do not think I ever did a better day's work in my life. I've saved hundreds of dollars; I have saved health; I have kept a clean mouth; I have been more genteel. Indeed, I can't more than begin to estimate the advantages; it would take up too much space. Now, boys, take my advice, and let tobacco alone. If you will, you will have more *cash* on hand, you will have better health, you will have stronger minds, your thoughts will be more vigorous; in a word, your chances for a long and satisfactory life will be greatly increased.

The French made an inquiry some time ago into the effects of tobacco in the colleges. They discovered the difference in the physical and intellectual standing of those who used it, and those who did not, to be so great, that Louis Napoleon issued an edict that no smoking should be permitted in any college or school. This edict in one day put out about thirty thousand pipes in Paris alone. In the competitive examinations in the military schools of France, the smokers of tobacco occupy the lowest place. Sir Charles Hastings says that the most severe case of epilepsy he ever saw was in a boy twelve years old, who had been a smoker two years, and recovered only when he desisted from its use. The

London Times, of 1865, says, M. Jolly, before the Academy of Medicine in Paris, declared that for forty years, from 1792 to 1832, during which time the revenue from tobacco was about the same, the lunatic asylums of France contained about eight thousand patients; but when the demand for the article increased, and the revenue went up from twenty-eight million francs to one hundred and eighty million francs, there were not less than forty-four thousand paralytic and lunatic patients in the institutions devoted to their accommodation. He also affirms that in proportion as tobacco was used in that empire, was the increase of nervous diseases and cancerous affections. Quoting from the *London Lancet* for 1862, M. Dumesnel writes that the quantity in weight used in America alone, is equal to the bread which would sustain ten millions of people.

Clean faces, clean clothes, clean shoes, and clean finger-nails, indicate good breeding. Never leave your clothes about the room. Have a place for every thing, and every thing in its place.

"Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things: now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible."

LETTER XXXII.

Reading the New Testament together—Bishop Paine's explanation—John and William—Mushroom development.

DEAR CHILDREN:—What a variety of letters I have received during the past few weeks! They have come from every point of the compass.

How glad I am to hear that so many are reading the Testament and Psalms with me! To think that I have influenced so many to do that one thing does me a great deal of good. I have read the chapters many a time before, but I find something fresh each time; in fact, the book is like a kaleidoscope—every time you turn it, new and still beautiful developments are made.

Ask your mother, or your father, or your big brother, or your elder sister who has been to boarding-school, to tell you something about that word "kaleidoscope."

Week before last, I asked you why we all have two hands, two eyes, and two ears, and but one mouth. I did not expect the "nail to be hit so squarely on the head" as it has been done by three little friends—Flora C. Meaders, Blanche Brooks,

and Cora Bell. They all give the same reason, and I think they are right about it.

They say we are to see, hear, and do a great deal, and talk but little. Bishop Paine told my little folks, the last time he was at my house, that they were to see, hear, and do just twice as much as they talked. I make a motion, now, that we accept the bishop's explanation and act upon it. What say you?

Let me warn you, my dear children, just here. So many people talk too much! It has always been so—as far back as we have any record. Eve even talked a little too much in Eden; the result is still operating.

One of the New Testament writers gives us some forcible declarations in regard to the unbridled tongue. When you come to the place, pause awhile and read slow. I do not know but it would be a good idea to spell every word. I make this suggestion for the reason that my teacher, when there is something he is particularly anxious for me to know—a word, for example—he spells it out for me, and then tells me to do it. He has a reason for it, and I do not know any better than to do just as he tells me. Children ought always to do that way; but, from all I can learn, there are some who have lived but a very short time, and yet they presume to know more than both father and mother. They know better what kind of company they ought to keep; they know better what kind of books and papers they ought to read, and all that. John and William know that the corn and cotton have been

worked enough, and ought to be "laid by," long before their father does. They know there is no use in this, that, and the other requirement, much better than their parents. That is what I call mushroom development. It spreads out smartly, but it's so soft! I do n't like it a bit.

Several have written about the "barefooted cart." One little girl says that she can't imagine what kind of cart it is, unless it is like her father's—drawn by oxen. Another says it is a cart without horses; another, that the man walked without shoes, and carried his clothes on his back. Well, well, how you all have missed it! You are just as far from it as my children were; and yet how easy it is! Every thing seems easy, after we learn—do n't it? And too often we do n't have half the patience that we ought, with those who do n't know. We forget how *we* had to tug, and others had to tug with *us*, before we learned. Never get cross or fretful when you are trying to teach, if you see the scholar trying; remember he has enough to bear without that.

Now I will tell you about the cart. It was called barefooted because there were no iron tires on the wheels. I imagine I hear each of you saying, "Pshaw! why did n't I think of that?"

I received a letter from a nice little girl away up at Fort Smith, Ark., who says she would like to have my letters in a book. Suppose I do have them put in that shape, with my likeness, some day—would you begin to "save the eggs"? Your letters came, dear "Bonnie." Thank you. Loula R. T— writes me a nice letter from Gibson county, Tenn.

She wants me to tell her who Cain's wife was. I do n't know; neither is it important to be known, from the fact that there are a great many people living now that it would be as hard to trace their pedigree as that of Mrs. Cain, and yet I do not see that they are any the worse or better for it.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and before honor is humility."

LETTER XXXIII.

People ought to be as good as their word—That lawyer—
Altering the case—Scrub-oaks—Not doing as you would be
done by—Talking about others—Being polite.

DEAR CHILDREN:—People ought to be as good as their word; their word ought to be as good as their bond. I wouldn't give much for the integrity of anybody who fails to do right, deal justly, because of legal informality.

People who profess to belong to the kingdom of God, while they are subject to, must still be above, human law.

The Psalmist David, in giving an account of the characteristics of the dwellers in God's house, says: "He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not"—that is, agrees to something that afterward turns out to his disadvantage, and stands to it nevertheless. You know, some folks don't like to stand to a bad bargain, especially when it is against them; it don't matter so much who else it damages.

They are like that lawyer told of in an old-school "Reader," to whom a farmer submitted a case one

time. It is about this way, I think, he stated it: "Suppose my ox had gored yours and killed him, what do you think I ought to do?" "Why," said the lawyer, "as an honorable man, you would pay me for him, of course." "But," says the farmer, "it was your ox that killed mine." "Ah!" said the lawyer, "that alters the case!"

There are a great many people just like that lawyer; they want every thing on their side. I know it's human nature to do that way; but human nature, as it stands now, needs correction.

We are bound by the law of God to recognize the rights of others. We cannot live to ourselves without doing violence to ourselves, as well as to the divine law.

I mention this just now, because I know both boys and girls are inclined to be selfish, and I want them to guard against it. Do n't let it grow upon you, if you desire a vigorous soul in the evening of life's journey.

I never thought selfish people had much of a soul, any way. I have imagined that they are like the scrub-oaks you've seen in the woods by the roadside—short, rough, knotty—you could n't even get a good switch from a dozen of them; and who ever heard of one of them being split? They are fit for nothing but to burn, and hardly that.

It is very ugly to see little sisters and brothers get something good, and run away off to themselves and eat it all without saying any thing about it, and then tantalize the others by telling them what a nice time they have had, and how fine it was. They

are not doing as they would be done by, when they do that way.

You ought always to divide with your brothers and sisters; that will make them remember you when they get something.

There is another thing to which I wish to call your attention, and guard you particularly against. It is TATTling. What a disposition there is in that direction! It is not confined to childhood, although the most of folks who tattle began it when they were little. It runs like a fiery gleam through almost every grade of society.

It does n't sound well to hear other people's faults brought up and discussed when they are absent. It always makes me think that whoever does it is, to say the least, careless about the reputation of the party—and that no one ought to be, for we should be the guardians of each other's good name; therefore, I suggest that you never say this or that one is mean, stingy, or cross, behind his back. Even admitting that it is so, it will do no good. It will increase the inclination in you to speak of faults; you will become uncharitable; your heart will lose all its generous feelings, if you give way to this inclination. Tell all the good you know about people; that will tend to elevate the better feelings; it will give tone and a higher pitch to the aspirations of others. That, you know, would do good. More folks ought to be doing good than there are.

Always be polite. Say, "Yes, sir," "No, sir." When you go to bed, say, "Good-night." Do n't make fun of lame or otherwise unfortunate people.

Pay special attention to the poor. Do n't make any remark that you think will injure any one's feelings. Never treat dumb animals badly. Remember, they can't complain, but they can suffer; do n't forget to feed and water them regularly. Let the birds' nests alone. Never say "how" or "which" for "what." Good spelling, writing, and grammar lie at the foundation of all good education.

"Riches profit not in the day of wrath; but righteousness delivereth from death."

LETTER XXXIV.

The midshipman's request—Egypt—The Great Desert—
Joseph—Pharaoh—Moses—Fine linen—King Amasis—
Splitting stone—The Great Pyramid.

DEAR CHILDREN:—I suppose you have been reading the "Midshipman's Narrative," by Captain Gift—haven't you?

You know, a few weeks ago he called upon me to give a letter about Egypt, the Dead Sea, the Great Desert, the physical geography of the country—a host of things, either one of which would, if fairly dealt with, make a book.

I wish I was able to do all the captain calls for; but time and space have both claims upon me.

I know there are a great many things that could be told about that wonderful country and people that would interest you all greatly; but I will have to content myself with simply telling enough to let you know that I have read about them. All I know myself is from books. I never traveled there, but I have often wished to do so.

You who have read the Bible know that the Jews were in captivity there for hundreds of years; that it was the birthplace of Moses, God's lawgiver;

and that Joseph, who used to wear a coat of many colors, was sold by his brethren to some traveling traders, and was carried by them to Pharaoh. The term Pharaoh is generic, and simply means the king that then reigned. There is no certainty as to what his real name was. Mr. Bunsen thought that it was Sesertisen of the twelfth dynasty, because a famine was mentioned as having occurred during that period. Eusebius thought it was the shepherd Apophis. Mr. Smith rather inclines to the latter opinion, and gives the high position to which he advanced Joseph as a reason; but adds, "That may be due to divine interposition." The character of that reign was, says the same authority, predominately Shemite. Hence it was not strange, after all, that Joseph was so highly preferred.

You must bear in mind that "Joseph's Pharaoh" was not the one that so cruelly treated the Israelites. I call your attention to this, because I remember when I thought he was one and the same.

You know that it is stated in the Bible that "a new king arose, which knew not Joseph." Under him the Israelites suffered. In the first place, he ordered all the male children to be killed at birth. The doctors feared God, it is said, and disregarded that order.

He then charged all his people to throw every Hebrew male child in the River Nile. This order seems to have been observed, because we read that Moses was found near the shore in a basket made of rushes. His mother had taken this precaution, rather than risk the cruel Egyptians. She pre-

pared the little vessel, and launched it with its precious freight herself. There were no "top" or "main" sails, or "rudder-bands," or mighty engines, on that craft. It was a simple structure, but God was the pilot.

It was guided near to shore. Pharaoh's daughter saw it, and perhaps the little passenger looked smilingly through its tears into her face. She was delighted, and, having no child, determined to take him and rear him as her own. I do n't know how old he then was, but it is evident that he had not been weaned, because she immediately inquired for a nurse. Full of anxiety, his sister, who had been waiting to see what would become of him, inquired if she should go and procure one from the Hebrew women. Pharaoh's daughter said, "Go." She went, and who do you think she brought? Why, Moses's own mother! Do n't you reckon she cried for joy when she took the little fellow in her arms once more? I should n't wonder if she did.

Not much is really known of Moses after that, until he became a man. All that the record says is, that he grew and became the son of Pharaoh's daughter. She called him Moses because she drew him out of the water—Hebrew, "Mashah," to draw out, being the meaning of the name.

The Egyptians were a highly-educated people; and, as a beautiful writer has said, "While the Greeks, young in knowledge, sounded a trumpet before them, and called on all the world to admire their ability, old Egypt had grown gray in wisdom, and was so secure of her acquirements that she did

not invite admiration, and cared no more for the opinion of a flippant Greek than we do to-day for that of a Fiji Islander." And yet Moses was said to have been learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; that was to be learned indeed.

We hear a great deal of the advance made in science, arts, etc.; claims are made for this, that, and the other discovery, and all that; and lo! old Egypt seems to have known them over three thousand years ago. Take, for example, the science of chemistry. The perfection of this science is illustrated by the preservation of human bodies—mummies. "And," says the same writer quoted above, "the successful embalming was not a chance discovery, or an art known by rule of thumb only, but that it was as fairly brought out from definitions and maxims as was any induction of Faraday." The word chemistry comes from *chemi*, and *chemi* means Egypt.

Mr. Kendrick says: "The decorative borders found on Greek vases, and ascribed to the Greeks, were only copies from the Egyptian;" and they were found on the walls of a tomb before Greece existed.

The Egyptians had a considerable knowledge of manufactures also. They grew flax in abundance, and with it they wrought in the highest style. You know, when Joseph found favor with Pharaoh, it is said that he had the king's own ring put on his finger, a gold chain around his neck, and a vesture of fine linen to array his person.

Some think a thing fine, others do not; hence the

term itself carries no special weight. However, the linen of Egypt was celebrated all over the world; and what is more, writers tell us that it can be seen and handled to this day, and that nearly all the mummies were wrapped in it; also that the wrappings are in excellent preservation. I do not suppose the finest was used for that purpose. But in order to give you an idea of what was considered fine, I will tell you what I read, said to be taken from Pliny, who gives a clear idea of what was considered fine in the days of King Amasis—six hundred years before Christ. Amasis sent Lindus a garment every thread of which was composed of three hundred and sixty-five minor threads twisted together. That was fine—was n't it?

They also understood mechanics. Where are there now any structures such as they built? According to Mr. Bunsen, the Great Pyramid measured eighty-two million one thousand one hundred and eleven feet, and would weigh six million three hundred and sixteen thousand tons. He says also that the masonry was wonderful, the joints being scarcely perceptible—not wider than the thickness of silver-paper—the cement so tenacious that fragments of the casing-stone still remain in their original position.

History informs us that during the reign of Menes there was a little dabbling in water-works. One of the principal branches of the Nile was turned out of its course to favor the building of Memphis—not Memphis, Tenn., children, but Memphis in Egypt.

The way they split stone may be of interest to

many of you, too. They cut a small groove the whole length of the piece, and inserted dry wooden wedges—gluts, I believe, they are called now by wood-choppers. Then they poured water into the groove. The wedges would expand all at once, and with such force as to split the fragment away, as smoothly as a diamond cuts glass.

They also understood geometry, no doubt; because Joshua knew how to divide the Holy Land, after conquering it. It is on record that they made maps.

They understood astronomy, watched the periods of planets and constellations, and calculated eclipses.

The rotundity of the earth, the sun's place in the center of our system, the starry composition of the Milky Way, and the borrowed light of the moon, are thought by Mr. Wilkinson to have been no secrets to them.

There are a great many other things I could tell you, but can't do it now. I must give a few lines as to the geography of Egypt. It is a country in North-east Africa, and extends from the Mediterranean Sea to the first cataract of the Nile. It was called by some Kemi, or the Black Land, from the color of the soil.

The great physical peculiarity of Egypt is the absence of rain, the land being watered by the annual overflow of the Nile. The climate is mild and healthy, especially south of the Delta. In the desert from Cairo to Alexandria the air is more moist than farther south. From the middle of August to December the wind blows from the west principally;

from that time till March, from the east. The overflow of the Nile reaches its height at the end of September. The decline is visible about the middle of October, and it subsides during the month of April. The crops are sown in November, and harvested in March.

The geology of Egypt is varied. Suffice it to say, hills and rocky mountains are numerous. Consequently, a great portion of its scenery is wild and rude, the granite rocks extending along the shore of the Red Sea nearly to the Gulf of Suez.

Its natural history and productions are also interesting, but I cannot more than allude to them. One of the most wonderful animals is the hippopotamus, or river-horse; the giraffe, jackal, hyena, and one-humped camel are also found there. Among fowls, the pigeon and vulture abound. Among reptiles, the most famous is the crocodile.

I cannot now write any thing like a satisfactory account of the Dead or Salt Sea; but I will say this much—it is said to cover the valley where Sodom and Gomorrah once stood. Most interesting accounts have been given by travelers. One says a fresh egg will float in its water, two-thirds out; that is because of its briny strength. If you have a book called "The Dead Sea and the Jordan," by Lynch, read it; it will instruct and interest you.

"He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly."

LETTER XXXV.

Deception—Working through—Going to protest—Following bad counsel—Miss Gaudaloupe—The circus—That whale—The theater—The dancing-school—The fisherman—The wreck.

DEAR CHILDREN:—I have been thinking for a week or two that I would write you a letter on deception. The thing is so common, and so adroitly practiced, that it would be well to have your minds directed to it.

The primary meaning of the word deceive is to “take aside,” to ensnare, to mislead the mind, to cause to err, to cause to believe what is false, or disbelieve what is true, to impose on, to delude. Second, to beguile, to cheat. That is what Mr. Webster, the great man who made the dictionary, says.

Now, is it possible that any of my little friends are guilty of deception? I have been a boy myself, and I must say that I am pretty well acquainted with every step of the road along which one up to my age has to travel. I don’t want to appear egotistical (look after that word before you read any farther), but I really think that I am a fair specimen of human nature.

In order to bring the subject directly before you, I will ask you a question. You need n’t answer it if

you don't want to, but you must think about it. Did any of you ever make believe you were sick, when you wasn't, just to keep from doing something that mother or father wanted you to do, or to keep from going to school; and all because you had idled away your time, and didn't know your spelling, or geography, or multiplication-table? I hope you have not; but if you have, don't do so any more, because you have been a deceiver; and the oftener you repeat acts of deception, the worse it will be for you. The fact is, it doesn't take a deceiver long to work through. Nobody that has misled others stands as well afterward.

Acknowledgments may be made, sorrow expressed, and so on, but whatever comes from that source is subject to a heavy discount. It is like a merchant's paper that has gone to protest—nobody wants to invest in it. And you have no idea how quick such news spreads. The winds seem to carry it round. I pity the poor fellow who suffers in that way. He may recover, but it is almost as uncertain, and equally as slow, as a bad case of typhoid fever.

You know Solomon says that in the multitude of counselors there is safety. Of course he meant good counselors. There can be no safety in bad ones.

Young people, and old ones too, often have more bad counsel than good, and I am sorry to say the bad sometimes prevails. For example, Miss Gaudaloupe is invited to an evening entertainment. Her mother is a sensible woman and a Christian. She advises her daughter to dress plainly, but neatly, and the daughter promises to do so; but before

night she meets with Mrs. —, and the principal conversation is, of course, "the party." Mrs. — wants to know what she is going to wear. "Mamma wants me to wear such a dress. She says I will look as well, and that I will be as much thought of in that as any other, and by those whose society is worth cultivating, more." "Now," says Mrs. —, "don't you do any such thing. If I were you, I wouldn't go by any old *fogy* mother—I'd dress party *style*. I would not think of covering up those pretty arms, and that neck of yours. Not I. You let me fix you up."

It is needless to say that that speech turns the youngster's head clear round. Her vanity and pride are both set on fire, and mother's counsel shrinks out of sight. Nothing will do now but Mrs. — shall arrange her toilet. She does so, and behold! Miss Gaudy is arrayed as a young lady "of the period." She listened to bad counsel, and ignored her mother's. Need I say that she did not respect her mother as she should have done? I will let you judge of that yourself. I pity the poor girl or boy that turns from the sincere counsels of a dear father or mother. Don't you do it.

There are so many things that are in themselves harmless, which are used by the enemies of virtue to inveigle unwary souls! I might mention forty of them, but will only call your attention to a few. There is the circus, for one. Henry and Maria can't see any harm in going, especially if the advertisement says there is to be quite an exhibition of animals; and they are ready, too, to believe all the ad-

vertisement says, no matter how ridiculous. Not long ago the showman, Barnum, came to Memphis, and such a parade, and such flourishing of trumpets, you never heard. He marched his company through the streets. He had great painted cages, said to contain this and that animal, never seen before out of its native jungle by the Nile. Another with a great whale painted on the outside, spouting water away up. And don't you think there were people—not children, either—in this great city who actually believed that Barnum had a "very whale" in that cage? They forgot that it takes a sea to hold whales. The whole thing was a deception.

Mary says: "Well, I wouldn't go to see and hear the vulgarisms of the thing at all. I just want to see the animals."

I have heard that people who belong to the Methodist Church go sometimes, and when talked to about it, say: "Well, I saw the procession, and heard that there were so many natural curiosities, and as I never saw a whale, I thought I would go. To tell the truth, after I got there I felt sorter out of place, and was about to leave, when I happened to look round and saw Mr. A——, of the Presbyterian Church. My conscience still worked, but I felt a little more excusable, and concluded to stay."

Allow me to say that Church-members who do so step outside the lines, and are on forbidden ground. They lay themselves liable to be sneered at by worldly-minded people, as well as exposed to the infectious influence of a degraded and perverted taste.

Then there is the dancing-school. A great many say that they can see no harm in dancing. "It is a good exercise, and besides, it learns folks to be graceful." Now, this I seriously doubt, for I have seen in my time young men who had been through, that did not know what to do with their hands and feet when in company. I have thought that they felt awkward, and if they did, they did not deceive their looks at all. The only thing that seemed to give any relief at all was their pocket handkerchief; and dear me! how some of them do handle it! I feel for such a fellow when he gets into company with truly refined ladies. To talk about learning grace at a dancing-school! Pooh! Bosh! It is recorded that in the ancient times it was far from customary for ladies of distinction to dance in public; they considered it indecent if they were so much as present at public entertainments. Queen Vashti thought it so dishonorable that, rather than submit to it, even when commanded by King Ahasuerus, she forfeited her crown. Turn to the first chapter of Esther, and read the twelfth verse.

If you want to be naturally graceful, begin to practice at home around the fireside, when nobody is looking at you. Notice carefully the most refined ladies and gentlemen that come to visit your father and mother—take them as models. Did you ever watch the little kittens on the rug? Who ever saw any thing to excel them in graceful motion? What "Madame" or "Signior" was their teacher, think you?

Next comes the theater, and O how fascinating is

the stage! Says one: "There can certainly be no harm in going with a well-behaved company"—select, of course—"to hear actors recite; and then one learns so much about human nature—that is what I go for, principally." Indeed! but couldn't more of that be learned in every-day life? Can you go amiss for examples—real, not imitated? I venture I can learn more human nature at my house any morning of the world than a whole theater company could represent in a week.

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—Pa takes the *Christian Advocate* and the *Western Methodist*, and when the papers come, all want to read "Uncle Bob's Letters;" so while pa cuts and sews the Advocate, we get Uncle Peter to read your letters to us, and then we read them over again when we get a chance. You invite the children to write to you, and I had been thinking for a long time that I would do so, when, the other day, Uncle Peter said: "Solomon, why do you not write some letters to Uncle Bob? You like to read his letters so well, and he desires the young folks to write to him."

"O do, Solomon," said little Sis, "and tell him he must have a nice, long letter in the paper every week, and ask us hard questions—it is so funny hunting them up." But big Sis—that is Florence—said: "Now, Bud, don't you scribble any of your nonsense to Uncle Bob, and don't you address him as '*Dear Uncle*'—it sounds too familiar. You should call him Mr. Robert—what's his name." But Uncle Peter—dropping his paper upon his knee, and looking over his specs—said: "Florence, you had better let Solomon write his own way, unless you have better advice to give him than that. Uncle Bob will not be offended, I am certain, at being called '*Dear Uncle*' by any of the children who love to read his letters."

But what shall I write about, uncle? "Well," said he, "tell him about this country, or about the academy, the church, or the Sunday-school," etc.

It is so late, and I'm so sleepy, that I must close now, but will try to tell you of our beautiful valley next week.

Yours truly,

SOLOMON SIMPLE.

Whatever others may say or think in regard to the things I have mentioned, matters not. I believe them to be dangerous, consequently they must be watched. Look sharp, my dear children, you will lose nothing by avoiding them altogether.

I will illustrate. Once upon a time I was reading about fishing. It is said that when an experienced fisherman goes for bass, he chops up a good hunk of meat quite fine, and when the tide is right, he scatters it all over the face of the water. Pretty soon the fact that there is something good about is communicated. No one knows how, but it is done. The bass come up in shoals, and one after another swallows down the luscious morsels. They make the water fairly foam beating each other off. The old fisherman understands his business, and presently he flings out some pieces with hooks in them, and lo! Mr. Bass soon flounders on the shore.

Now, the devil is a fisherman. He baits with things that you can see no harm in. You take to them eagerly. As soon as he sees you fairly committed, he will fling out his hooks, and, like the bass, you will be seen floundering on the shore, among the putrefying carcasses which already line it. And men will pass you by and mournfully reflect upon the lines of the poet:

I saw a wreck upon the ocean flood.

How sad and desolate! No man was there:

No living thing was on it. There it stood;

Its sails all gone; its masts were standing bare;

. 9*

Tossed in the wide, the boundless, howling sea.

The very sea-birds screamed, and passed it by.

And as I looked, the ocean seemed to be

A sign and figure of eternity,

The wreck an emblem seemed of those that sail

Without the Pilot Jesus on its tide.

Thus, thought I, when the storms prevail,

Shall rope, and sail, and mast be scattered wide;

And they, with helm and anchor lost, be driven,

In endless exile sad, far from the port of heaven.

**"Lying lips are abomination to the Lord; but they that deal truly
are his delight."**

LETTER XXXVI.

The rheumatism—All hands taking two jumps—Who beat—
A great laugh—A complete cure.

DEAR CHILDREN:—One morning, not long ago, we had quite a time at our house. The classes at the school where one of our daughters attends were being examined in the term studies. Daughter had found a book that did not treat of any of her lessons. She had spent too much of her time with it, and of course she was not well prepared for the examination, and did not want to go to school; so she came moping into our room, and told her mother right easy (I think she was rather suspicious of me by the way she acted) that she had the rheumatism “real bad.” Now, says I to myself, I’ll test that case directly, and we’ll all have a little fun. Four little ones were scattered around before the fire, some putting on shoes, some lacing them, and altogether making about as much ado as a gang of blackbirds. I began to ask some questions away off yonder. Finally, says I, “See here, children, did you ever try who could jump the farthest?” All hands said, “No, sir.” “Well,” says I, “who can beat now for five cents?” In less

time than it takes me to tell, all were on their feet saying, "I," "I," "I." So I cleared the way right on the spot; dressing was suspended. I fixed the place for their heels, which was the outer edge of the rug, before the fire. "Now," says I, "each one is to have two jumps." They did their best. I marked the distance made, and then jumped myself. Now, who do you think beat? Why, the rheumatic! I couldn't hold any longer; I had to laugh outright. I had made a point, and they all saw it; the rheumatism was cured. I haven't heard of it since. Whoever heard of jumping being good for that complaint before?

But, say you, didn't you whip the child for telling the "story"? Not with a switch, although I think it would have been a relief to her, if I had, as I told her that I was going to write to you all about it. You see I have found out that there are more, and oftentimes better, ways to whip folks than with switches. Physical force is a poor thing to govern appreciative intelligence. That will do for those who cannot be corrected any other way, and there are many such. I think the switch is often used when the balance of power is in the wrong hand. The disposition of children ought to be studied more than it is. How to do in every case is often a vexing question, and unless one calls into play the upper part of the brain forces, ruinous blunders will be made. I think that is a subject for prayer, specially. No one can afford to raise children without drawing heavily from above. Many neglect this, and are ever at their wits' end. They

are like some doctors who, "for the sake of science," so called, will experiment with a sick man beyond their knowledge. Now, I say you mustn't go ahead until you have the best of reasons for believing that you are right. But, say you, all this talk aint for us children. Well, be it so. Ask your father and mother to read it for you—you "skip."

"Charity suffereth long, and is kind."

9*

LETTER XXXVII.

Didn't want to go to school—Long division—Could n't see through it—Got the better of it—Rhubarb and jalap—Sick sure enough.

DEAR CHILDREN:—A few weeks ago I asked you if you ever feigned sickness to keep from school. As no one has pleaded guilty so far, I will do so myself.

You see, when I was a boy, I was a boy all over. I cut more figures than a little. It seemed to me that it was easier for me to get into a difficulty than it was to get out, and yet I never would stay out. If I avoided one, I was sure to get into another. I have already told you of several, but here's another: I didn't want to go to school. I think I was just entering *long division*. Somehow I couldn't see just through it the first day; that discouraged me; however, I went again, but harder still it seemed. I didn't know how to "bring down," or how many to bring, either; I didn't know what to do with what was over; and it seemed to me that I never would learn long division. I thought I would rather stay at home and burn brush. I used to think that was hard, but it wasn't anywhere along side of division. I wished the man who made the arithmetic

had had something else to do. It seemed to me that he just tried how he could worry us boys. If that had been his idea, I think he would have been perfectly satisfied if he had seen me. I made out I was "awful" sick. I coughed the best I could, and tried to look like a calf, and in that I made a perfect success. I could see just as plain as could be that mother saw through the whole thing; but rather than acknowledge like a man, as I should have done, I concluded to stand to it and take the consequences. Just like everybody else that lies—ready to tell any number in order to cover the first. Mother said: "Well, my young man, if you are sick, I intend to give you a dose of medicine." That made me quiver a little. I don't suppose there ever was a boy that hated to take medicine worse than I did. I said: "I am sick, but not bad enough off for that." I didn't know but that I would be well by dinner-time. I usually got better about that time. But all was of no avail. The old rhubarb and something else—I think "they" called it jalap—was hauled out, and about a half tea-cup full was mixed up and handed to me to swallow. I don't think if mother had tried that she could have hit on any thing I disliked as much. I began to realize the force of that passage of scripture which says: "The way of the transgressor is hard." There was nothing left for me to do but either make confession or take the dose. I chose the latter; but, dear me! didn't I pay for it, though? I could smell and taste the stuff ever so long; and besides, it made me sick sure enough. I haven't had any use for

rhubarb since. I was for a long time prejudiced against rhubarb pies, having never seen or tasted any, and having knowledge of only one kind of rhubarb. Notwithstanding, I was like some people are now: I thought what I did not know wasn't worth knowing. I never experimented that way any more, I assure you. I took up the line of march to school, and although I twisted and turned on the bench many a time, and would go to the bucket for water oftener than I wanted any, and so on, yet I got the better of *long division*; and what is more, I have never forgotten it, and don't expect to forget it.

Now, boys, if you ever get into such a scrape as that, don't do like I did. Acknowledge at once. Matters will be adjusted quicker and more satisfactorily. Besides, you will weaken the force of the temptation, and, perhaps, the next time resist altogether. Then you'll feel so good! I tell you, after all is said and done, there is no feeling so pleasant in this life as the consciousness of having done right. It enables you to hold up your head, and to look people straight in the eye. It makes you feel that you have rights, and that others are bound to respect them. I tell you, if you want to stand firm, integrity must be the corner-stone of your character.

I have received several letters since last week. Solomon is on hand again, as you will see. "Louise Linwood," of Holly Springs, Miss., writes that she began to read the Testament and Psalms Jan. 11, and finished March 1. She asks me two questions. One of them is serious and important. When I

begin my next series I will answer her. Eugenia Blair, of Tupelo, Lee county, Miss., writes a nice letter about Johnny and herself saving their nickels for missions, and as our Church is a missionary Church, and as I want you all to become interested in that work, I will publish her letter. Read it, and then begin to do likewise. Then little Mollie Gore, from or near Pittsboro, Miss., sent "that new baby" a nickel. Brother Bounds says Miss Mollie is only four years old, and would not rest until he promised her to send it. That nickel will be put where it will grow.

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—We live in a grove of oak, hickory, and elm-trees, and there are so many grape-vines about us that the name of *Viney* has been given to the village. It is nearly in the center of a beautiful valley, almost circular, and about ten miles across it, and surrounded by mountains. It is watered by numerous clear mountain streams, that unite and form the Illinois River, which flows first westward and then southward, through the Indian Territory, until it unites its waters with the great Arkansas River. Although the valley is well wooded, it is dotted with small, park-like prairies, and being famous for good water, rich soil, and health, is being rapidly settled up, though we are about one hundred miles from a railroad.

As we are on the summit of the Ozark range, the mountains around us are really mountains on the top of mountains, yet they are not tall enough to be covered with perpetual snow; and as their outlines are all soft and wavy, they cannot rival in grandeur the Alps or the Rocky Mountains. Cousin Celestia Ann, who is the poetess of the Simple family, says this valley looks as if it had been the camp of the giants, and the mountains were the bulwarks they had thrown up around their grand encampment. They are densely wooded, and on their very summits are found such trees as the black walnut

and black locust; and a ridge south of this was named from the quantity of *cane* which grew upon it. Pa says that from one of these mountains he saw the Boston Mountain to the south, and toward the north-west a blue range away off in the Indian Territory, west of Benton county.

Uncle Peter says that Brother Johnson can tell you something about the apples that grow in this region, as he tasted enough to know their quality. He also thinks that the large baskets full of Shannon pippins brought into the Conference-room kept the preachers' jaws so busy that they could not find time to make long speeches. SOLOMON SIMPLE.

"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand."

LETTER XXXVIII.

Pride—Tight lacing—Shoes a mile too big—The doctor sent for—The pint bottle—Beef-gall—Going to Florida—She dies—The obituary notice.

DEAR CHILDREN:—The “Book” says: “Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

I reckon that pride has been the cause of as much trouble as any thing in the world. To gratify it, people will subject themselves to almost any thing; *e. g.* (find out what *e. g.* means), a young lady will, in order to have what is called a “wasp-waist,” cram herself into corsets two or three times too small, and then lace until she can hardly breathe. She will squeeze her feet into shoes always “a mile too big,” and wear them until her feet are deformed, and so diseased that no shoe-maker can make any thing that she can wear. She will array herself in a low-neck gauze dress and silk slippers, to attend a party in the dead of winter, and dance so dressed until morning; then, with blood at fever-heat, she will rush into another and a much colder atmosphere, without extra covering. These things are practiced for a time, it may be, without any very

decided inconvenience; but after awhile the mischief begins to develop. A little flush is on the cheek; a hacking cough becomes troublesome, especially at night; low spirits, or, as some call them, "the blues," are frequent, with loss of appetite; nothing agrees with her. She feels terrible, but does n't know what is the matter. She grows worse daily. Finally, a doctor is sent for. He sounds the chest, looks at the tongue, feels the pulse, and says: "I find that your liver is disordered, and your heart is in sympathy with it. I do not think there is any organic disease of the heart, but there is some functional. You will have to be very careful. You must not walk up steps more than you can help; keep away from excitements as much as possible; avoid all excesses of heat and cold; keep your feet dry and comfortable; go to bed early; do n't wear your clothing tight, because your liver, and lungs, and heart are feeble, and any extra effort they have to make will increase your troubles." He then writes a prescription, which is sent to the apothecary. Pretty soon the messenger returns with a pint bottle, labeled, "Take a wine-glass full three times a day." This treatment is observed for a few days, or until some old aunty comes in. She knows all about the case; many a one has come under her eye. She has seen folks "nothing but skin and bones" who were cured by her remedy. And what do you think she recommends? Why, beef-gall and pulverized chicken-gizzard! The poor invalid is willing to try any thing. The gall and gizzard are procured and used;

but there is no relief. The newspapers are ransacked for remedies. Dr. this and that one has made a wonderful discovery; a complete and correct description of every symptom of the disease is given. Hope immediately lights up the pale and sad countenance, and the invalid fancies that that man's medicine will cure her. Five dollars is sent for six bottles. The base of the stuff being whisky, it of course acts as an artificial stimulant at first. The poor sick one thinks she is better, and so reports; but reaction soon sets in, and what was thought to have been reinstated strength was only a goad to the almost worn-out functions. The whole round of patent medicines is made, and yet there is no improvement. Finally, a trip to Florida is advised; hundreds of dollars are furnished, and to Florida she goes. The climate is charming, the fruits are delicious; but these things bring no relief—all is to no purpose. In a few days the mail or the telegraphic flash informs her friends that she is dead. Her remains are brought home and buried. Some friend, or perhaps her pastor, writes an obituary, and characterizes her death as untimely and a mysterious dispensation of providence. Now, what are the facts in her case? She violated the laws of health from the beginning. The first time she laced her body under natural size she laid the foundation for the liver and heart trouble. It was impossible for those organs to perform their functions under the circumstances. When she danced all night, and then, half-dressed, exposed herself in the open air, the root of consumption was planted. Her own

imprudence and excesses brought her troubles upon her; and were I asked to write an epitaph, I would write this—THE SUICIDE. All the providence that was in the matter simply vindicated the established law of God, which teaches that the punishment follows close upon the heels of the transgression. This is what I want to impress upon your minds. If you keep unseasonable hours, and are intemperate in your eating, drinking, and dress, you will have to suffer to the full extent of such indulgence. You had better deny yourself for the time, if need be. Above all things, be natural; make no attempts to improve nature—you can't do it; your failure will be miserable, and will end to your serious disadvantage. Remember that God will hold you to account for your bodies as well as your souls.

How many nice letters I do get! I would like to publish them all, but cannot. Sometimes I am at a loss to decide which to leave out; but I am free to say that those who write about making efforts to be useful and become Christians have attracted my attention most.

MY DEAR UNCLE BOB:—I have not written to you for some time; but I have been a constant reader of the *Western Methodist*, and I am always delighted to receive a new paper. The first thing I look at is my dear Uncle Bob's "Letters to the Children;" and as I am a little girl, or rather a child, I always think that your interesting letters are written to me. You spoke of having your letters published, with your likeness, and wished to know if we would commence saving eggs. Please let me know when it will be ready, and the eggs will be forthcoming. My parents have a large number of poultry—about forty Guinea-chickens—and if we can find their nests,

it will not take long to pay for your book. I must try and get my papa to block his hounds, to prevent them from getting the eggs. My papa is a fox-hunter, and loves his dogs, and if he will block them, I promise to cook the bread to feed the dogs with, so I can get the eggs. He is a very kind papa, and I do not doubt but what he will gratify me that much. I am reading my Testament. I read it every night before retiring to bed; and I am like yourself—I always find something new. I try to live the life of a Christian, and I always try to do right, so that I may have a conscience void of offense toward my parents, and brothers and sisters, and my friends, and, above all, a clear conscience toward my Heavenly Father, so that when I leave this world I may go to my home in heaven. Dear Uncle Bob, pray that I may hold out faithful to the end; and if you and I should not meet in this world, I hope to see you in heaven, and there form your acquaintance, and enjoy your company there, where friends never part. I can assure you that your very welcome letters have done me great good, and by all means continue them. Good-bye, my dear uncle. I remain, yours truly,

JENNIE.

UNCLE BOB:—I feel desirous to let you know how much delighted I am with your letters in the *Western Methodist*. I laugh heartily over many things you tell us; and there is much you say that is calculated to make us think seriously—those things you tell us we must do in order to be saved from our sins here, that we may have a bright home in heaven. Owing to the high water, last week, we did not get the *Methodist*. I was sorry to have to wait so long for it.

Our pastor, Brother Honnoll, comes to see us sometimes. He is a good man, and I enjoy his visits. All his people, I believe, are greatly pleased with him. He notices and talks to the children; that will make them love him, and try to be good, as he wants them to be. I am not a Christian, but I desire to be one. Give my love to the orphans; being one myself, I know how to sympathize with them. The Lord is good to me, in providing me a home with a family that love me and treat me kindly.

Uncle Bob, I am learning to cook, and I would be glad if you would tell me how to make the "cherry pone;" for I may wish to make one, like your mother used to make for you.

The children in Byhalia and vicinity, I have no doubt, would give you a warm welcome, if you would visit them some time this year. Your little friend,

MARTHA CORNELIUS.

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—Did you know you had a loving little nephew and niece in this new county of Lee? I am seven, and brother Johnny is five. We love dearly for mamma to read your kind, welcome letters to us, and beg you to continue them for ever so many years. Would n't we all be *good* children, if we followed always your kind counsel.

We wish we could see your little girls and boys (Johnny wants to know how many you have), and know they must be capital play-fellows. Give love to them all round, and please promise to bring them down to see us next vacation.

We have heard about the poor heathen children, and have felt so sorry for them that we have saved our nickels, and now send you \$1.50 missionary money, hoping that through it *one* little heathen boy or girl may learn of our blessed Jesus and beautiful heaven.

If all the children who read your letters would save their nickels and little earnings, and send to you, or good Dr. McFerrin, it would not be long before Bibles would greatly increase in heathen lands. We hope to send you more money soon.

Well, I am afraid I have written more than you will have the time or inclination to read, and so won't care for me to write again.

Please let me hear if you received our money safely.

Your loving little friend,

EUGENIA BLAIR.

Tupelo, Lee county, Miss.

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—Brother Jeffy is a subscriber to the *Western Methodist*, and has been for a long time. The papers with your letters reach us in time to read on Sundays. I always

try to be the first to read your paper, and letters to the young folks, and generally succeed. Some of our family try to get hold of it first, but I always put them off by getting some other paper not as interesting as your Letters. You say you are going to have your Letters put in book-form, which would be so nice and interesting for the young. Now, I would just ask every parent to buy one of Uncle Bob's "Book of Letters," when he has issued it. I think I shall be the first to buy one in our little town. THOS. J. HICKS.

MY DEAR UNCLE BOB:—We take several papers. The *Western Methodist* has always been the favorite with us all. Your letters to us children are very interesting. In fact, we children prize your column more highly than any other part of the paper. LOCKER WOOD.

DEAR UNCLE BOB:—We love the *Methodist* dearly; and since I have an Uncle Bob to write to me, it is dearer than ever—glad to have another word given us. Your niece, MOLLIE JONES.

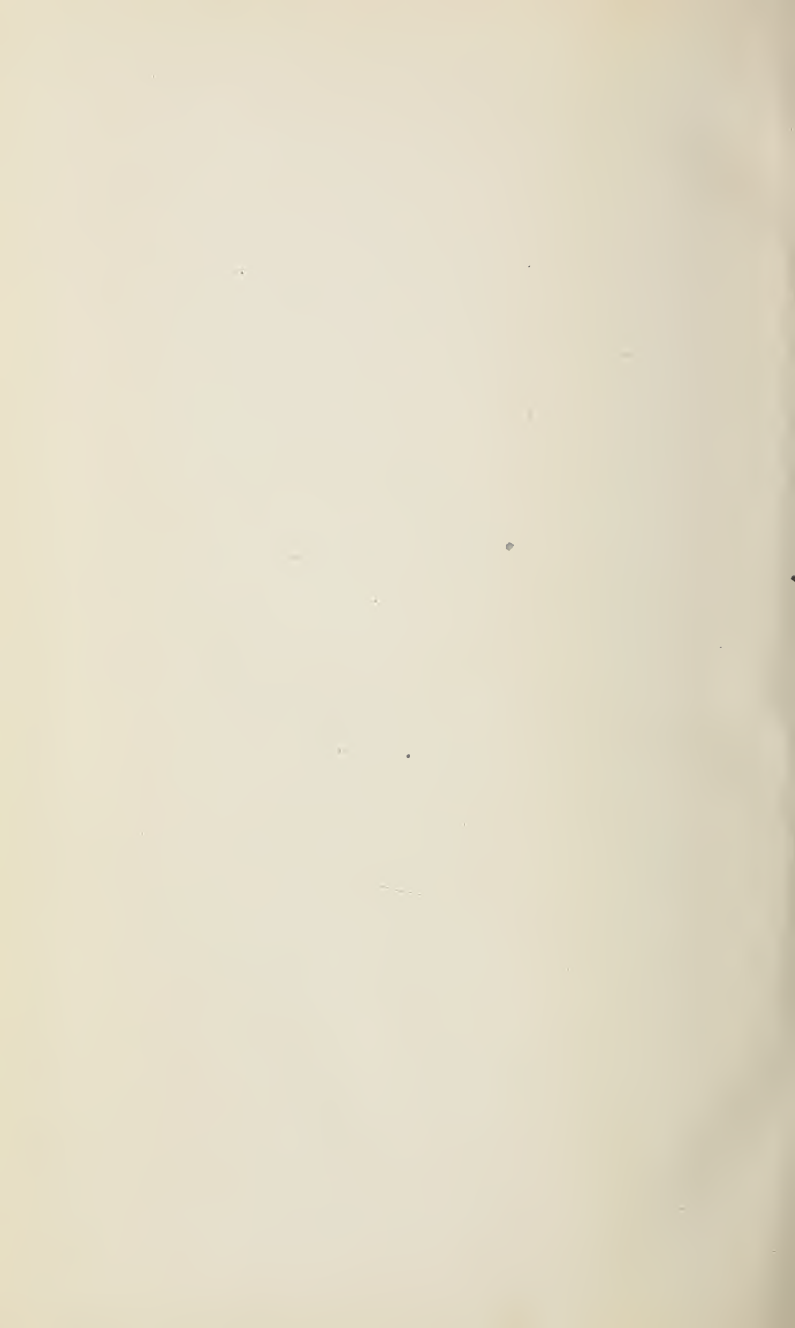
Martha wants me to tell her how to make "cherry pone." First, get the cherries; second, seed them, and stew about ten minutes, stirring in a little sugar to suit the taste. Set them by in a clean dish or bowl; then stir your meal-dough, and let it lighten. When ready for baking, prepare your old Dutch oven; clean it thoroughly; grease it with a little lard or a bacon-rind. Then mix your cherries and dough well together, and bake until done. Turn it out whole, in the biggest dish you've got, right in the middle of the table. Take the morning's milk, without skimming; pour it in a white pitcher; set the chairs to the table, and ring the bell. Then I would like to be with you.

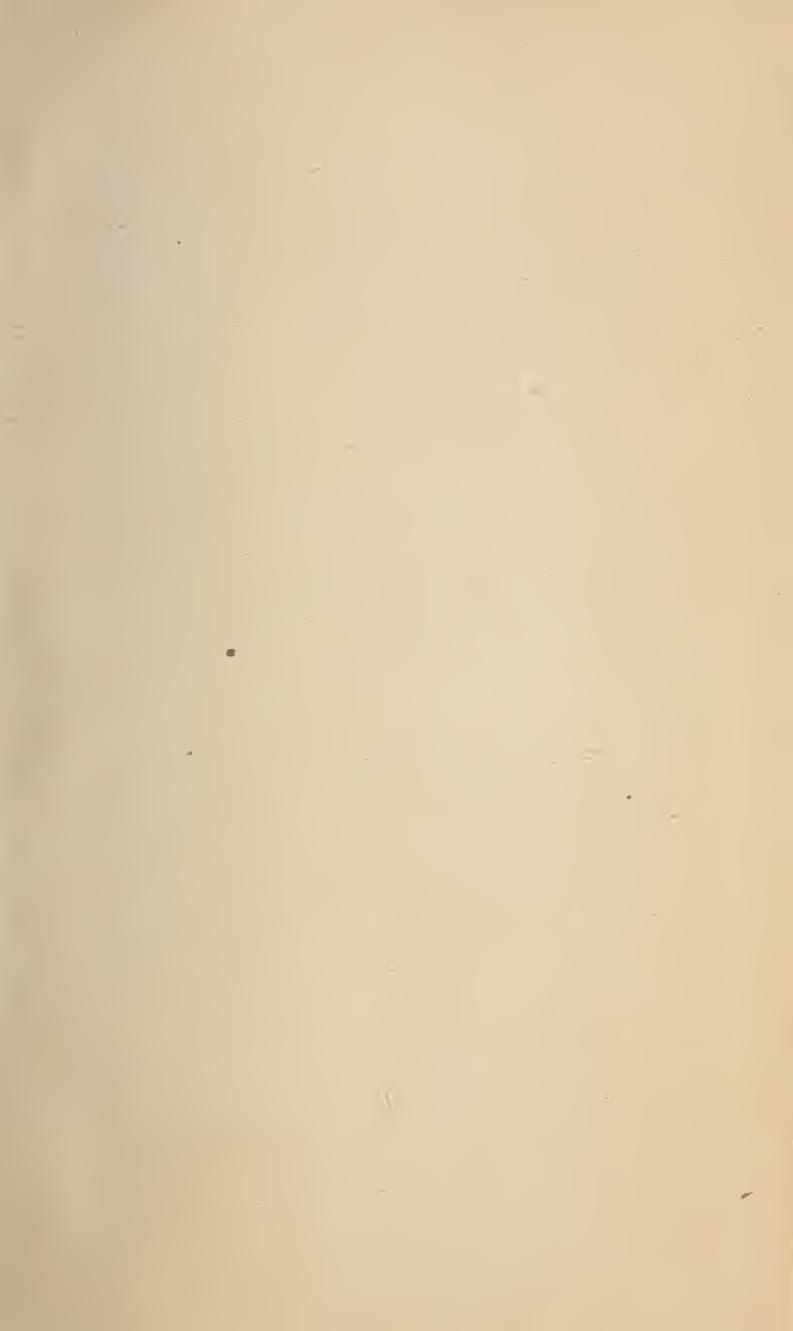
As the "midshipman" has offered a prize for the

best essay, I reckon you will want to contend for it, and of course will have no time to read letters from me until after you get through with that; and as I will be busy preparing for my book, getting up those things you will not see until it is ready, I have concluded to discontinue writing through the paper until after the General Conference. I expect to visit the Mammoth Cave, and other places, before I write again. Then look out.

"As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion."







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